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# CRISIS OF AUTHORITY

## Politics, Trust, and Truth-Telling in Freud and Foucault

Nancy Luxon

CAMBRIDGE

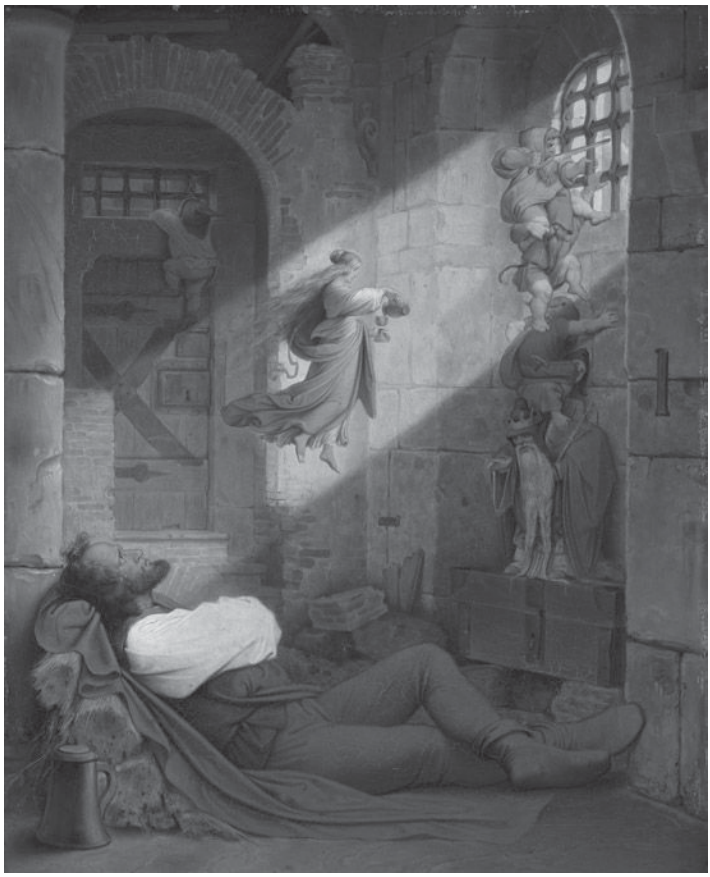
**Crisis of Authority**

*Politics, Trust, and Truth-Telling in Freud and Foucault*

*Crisis of Authority* analyzes the practices that bind authority, trust, and truthfulness in contemporary theory and politics in order to address the question how can individuals make ethical judgments about power and politics?

Drawing on newly available archival materials, Nancy Luxon locates two models for such practices – in Sigmund Freud's writings on psychoanalytic technique and in Michel Foucault's unpublished lectures on the ancient ethical practices of "fearless speech," or *parrhesia*. Luxon argues that the dynamics provoked by the figures of psychoanalyst and truth-teller are central to this process. Her account offers both a more supple understanding of the modern ethical subject and new insights into political authority and authorship.

Nancy Luxon is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She has also published several articles based on her archival research at the Foucault archives in Caen and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Moritz von Schwind's *The Prisoner's Dream* (1836) illustrates the common misunderstanding of psychoanalytic liberation as a fantasy of prison escape from unfulfilled desires. This misunderstanding is not entirely ill-placed. After all, a reproduction of this painting opened Sigmund Freud's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, and he briefly referred to the painting when lecturing on wish-fulfillment. That slippage from liberty to liberation is common even in contemporary thought. In a 1980 interview, Michel Foucault said, "If I accepted the picture of power that is frequently adopted, namely that it's something horrible and repressive for the individual, it's clear that preventing a child from scribbling on the walls would be an unbearable tyranny." He continues, less expectedly, to say, "But that's not it: I say that power is a relation. A relation in which one guides the behavior of others. And there's no reason why this manner of guiding the behavior of others should not ultimately have results which are positive, valuable, interesting, and so on." In the pages that follow, I will argue that we should rethink ethical cultivation along similar lines. I argue that liberty requires a confrontation with authority, even as it (somewhat paradoxically) revises and engages the very terms on which that authority is understood. The book closes with a gesture toward frame-breaking – the activity of breaking existing narrative frames of political events so as to involve audiences in the authorship of new ones. The cover image, Picasso's *Child Playing with a Truck*, nicely invites such a reading. Confined to the bottom left-hand corner of the painting, the child's play initially appears confined by the suffocating presence of culture in the form of heavily patterned wallpaper. And yet the issue from the child's activity of play lightly creeps upward and offers the beginnings of a new "frame" for the painting. The heavy, yet intangible, presence of culture and its authority may condition play. But authority does not over-write it.

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**NANCY LUXON**
*University of Minnesota*

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*For Karen and Crisi*
*Without whom, nothing*

# Contents

*Preface* *page* ix
*Acknowledgments* xv
*Abbreviations* xix

1. Authority and Its Discontents 1
*Asking What Is Authority?* 1
*Psychoanalysis and* Parrhesia *as Authoritative Practices* 10
*Authorship, Authority, and Rule* 18
*From Power to Authority: Mapping a Conceptual Transition* 26
*Beyond Suffering: The Relationship to Self and to Others* 33
*Speech-Activities and Scenes of Address* 37
*Practices of the Self and Contemporary Politics* 43
2. Risk and Resistance 49
*Education, Crisis, and the Vicissitudes of Authority* 49
*Formative Relationships and the* Nacherziehung 53
*The Containing Context of Psychoanalysis* 64
*The Dora Case History* 78
*Psychoanalysis as Combative Collaboration* 86
3. Conversations with the Unknown 93
*The Psychic Perspective of Change* 93
*Subjectivity and Narratives of Failure* 97
*Metaphoric Competence and Self-Writing* 109
*From Enactments to Authorship* 119
*Risk Society Re-examined* 126
*An Unintegrated Subject* 130

4. What Is an Author(ity)? 133
*The Educative Model of* Parrhesia 133
*Authorship and Authority* 137
*From Paris to Athens* 141
*Constructing the Ethical Practices of* Parrhesia *in Plato* 151
*Psychagogues and Their* Mauvais Doubles 164
*Risking Liberal Political Order* 170
5. The Authorial Subject 176
*In Resistance to Orthopaedy* 176
*Beyond Humanism and Choice* 180
*A Model for Ethical Self-Governance* 187
*From Self-Governance to Political Engagement* 196
*The In-Between Space of* Parrhesia 202
6. Audiences and the Proliferation of Meaning 207
*A Tale of Two Audiences* 207
*Narrative Authority of the Psychoanalyst* 211
*Spectacles about the Scaffold* 225
*Toward Judgment in Common* 233
*Diogenes and Ethopoetic Action* 237
*The Academy as Public Audience?* 245
*Interpretive Authority in Politics* 250
7. Breaking the Frame, Composing the Event 253
*Figuring Politics* 253
*From Metaphor to World* 258
*Breaking the Frame: The Turn to Literary Theory* 266
*Composing the Event: Elites and Public Audiences* 273
*From Relations of Control to Relations of Composition* 285
Conclusion 289
*Vulnerability and Agency* 289
*Educative Relationships to Authority and Public Culture* 300
*Reclaiming Authority* 304

*Bibliography* 307
*Index* 337

# Preface

Contemporary social and political theory has reached an impasse about a problem that once seemed straightforward: how can individuals make ethical judgments about power and politics? Inevitably such a question bears on subjectivity and self-formation. It also requires rethinking authorship and authority, so as to understand how such individuals can both author and ground their political judgments. To engage the question just posed, this book concentrates on three sets of overlapping practices and relationships – the relation to self, to others, and to truth-telling – shared by Freud and Foucault. I argue, first, that the dynamics of the Freudian psychoanalytic and Foucauldian parrhesiastic relationships are surprisingly similar. Each is modeled on a pedagogical encounter with a relationship to authority; trust and truth-telling arise as a product of this relationship, rather than being a precondition for entering into it. Second, I argue that psychoanalysis specifies the psychology necessary to sustain these relationships as they are adapted for more explicitly political practices. If political engagement is difficult to begin and even harder to sustain, then psychoanalysis can account for the motivation to initiate that engagement and the ability to endure the uncertainties that threaten to derail it. Finally, reading Freud against Foucault suggests that by deepening the practices of trust and truth-telling so scarce in contemporary politics, individuals can, despite their vulnerabilities, become more agentic.

My third claim carries with it the highest stakes. That I should turn to those thinkers considered to be architects of a contemporary "hermeneutics of suspicion" initially is counter-intuitive. But this choice of thinkers also speaks to the need to revalorize – to *transvalorize* – those practices, experiences, and modes of reflection already circulating through politics.

Contemporary critiques of power have played an urgent and necessary role in diagnosing how the fact of human plurality has taken the political form of persistent inequalities. From the 1970s to the early 1990s, contemporary political and social theory in the United States has been pre-occupied with questions about macro-processes related to state-formation, capitalism and its excesses, and cultural systems of meaning. The importance of these critiques in exploring the disjunctures between our political efforts and their historical effects cannot be underestimated. Nonetheless, these theories captured a period and a politics characterized by over-steadiness and over-stabilization. Some sixty years after the defining experience of World War Two, the political arena appears to be less one of over-steadiness than one of paralysis, be it the result of uncertainty, apathy, or withdrawal. In the face of so many political possibilities and obligations, it becomes hard for individuals to be motivated by any *one*. This paralysis is only exacerbated by a power that has become so omnipresent as to be dissipated and diffuse. It becomes possible to say anything – or nothing – with impunity precisely because words no longer touch on the core of power. In turning to "practices," I seek to think specifically and concretely about those interactions that can move beyond these subjectively experienced uncertainties and diffuse political power.

The turn to practices is broadly visible across both political theory and political science. By the 1990s, inquiry in the Anglo-American world into broad, macro-level questions had gradually morphed into the study and practice of identity politics. Broadly, the language of "practices" captured the movement from collective to personal concerns as well as from theory to embodied action.[1] It emphasized activity and process

[1] Political theory does not have an acknowledged "practice turn" that is discussed in its literature; questions of theory and practice have been at the heart of political thinking at least since Plato. Nonetheless, the language of practices has gained special salience in several key debates. It is most recognizable in the contrast of rule-bound ethics with those that are virtue- or practice-based. See Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985). The language is also associated with ordinary language theory and the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Stanley Cavell, and those who write alongside them. Linda Zerilli has used "practices" as a bridge between ordinary language practice and feminist practices; likewise it can be found in the work of Shoshana Felman: Linda Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), and Shoshana Felman, *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). And finally, as I discuss at greater length in Chapter 1, there is a burgeoning literature on ancient and contemporary "practices of the self." John Rajchman offers a good gloss on philosophy's turn to ethics and ethical practice. See John Rajchman, "Ethics after Foucault" *Social Text* 13/14 (1986): 165–83.

over *telos*. The need for greater understanding as to how such practices might be adopted and leveraged in the service of self-transformation is evident. If western politics has become one of apathy, then our political practices have become practices of *dis*engagement – of circumscribing our attachments to the smallest justifiable terrain. Turning to practices as the source for engagement, then, must be more than changing the terms of contract so as to jolt persons into action. To generate engagement, practices must redirect affective investment, they must be adequately reciprocal so as to ride out uncertainties and generate trust, and they must be dense enough to sustain broader frameworks of meaning. Indeed, to bolster the claim that these practices demonstrate the necessary intensity (one at once personal and political), they are often described as "like a therapy"[2] or offering the "sensitive therapy" of friendship,[3] and they occasionally acquire a pedagogical tinge. In reaching for this language, scholars of such bent seek to characterize the intense relationships that are at once personal and political, intimate and critical, local and meaning-laden.

Different periods and places have invoked different practices toward different ends: the ancient Greeks and Romans drew on different modes for "care of the self"; the Judeo-Christian tradition relied on an ascetics of self-renunciation; the early moderns spoke in terms of "soul-direction." These earlier vocabularies and practices no longer suffice for the contemporary western world. We need a framework of meaning that can speak to the invasion of uncertainty and doubt into the public realm, one that comes with the loss of external doctrines of authority such as nature, custom, religion, and tradition. Such a framework must be equal to the task, in Foucault's words, of cultivating "a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty."[4] To function, this interpretive framework must be able to draw on practices in trust and truth-telling, practices that would sustain the efforts of political community to authorize its deeds. In various ways, political theorists have long turned to Freud and Foucault, independently of one another, to address this challenge. As Richard Rorty has noted, we have long been "in the stage of suspecting that *something* is going to have to change in our old ways of speaking,

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophic Investigations*, 2nd edition, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), §133d.

[3] Andrew Norris uses this phrase to describe the work of Stanley Cavell in his Introduction to *The Claim to Community*, ed. Andrew Norris (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 15.

[4] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, p. 319.

but not yet knowing *what*."[5] Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices offer a context and a vocabulary in which to change these old ways of speaking.

This book thus has two goals. The first is to analyze the multiple, overlapping relationships that bind practices in trust, truth-telling, and authority together. The insight gained enables us to evaluate these relationships' pedagogical aim: to enable late moderns to develop their authorial capacities so as to engage with contemporary political authority. If we moderns must authorize and legitimate our own authoritative claims as a political community, then these relationships teach us to make and defend claims intrinsic to self- and political governance. By engaging the practices that underlie political authority, this book thus speaks to a classic problem of political theory. I argue that authority derives from a risky exchange modeled on that between educator and student, one that prepares for a no less dynamic exchange between rulers and ruled. As two of the intellectual minds most responsible for shaping the thought and politics of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud and Michel Foucault offer a compelling starting point for such a project. To Western society, Freud has contributed the model of the mind that shapes both popular consciousness of self-identity as well as the institutionalization of that identity in law, politics, and other areas. For his part, Foucault has articulated most clearly the doubts and uncertainties associated with the exercise of power, and indeed the pervasiveness of power throughout politics and society. As diagnosticians of modern western culture, Freud and Foucault also had a deeply practical bent. Their own interest in practices was motivated by the vulnerabilities they witnessed when working with patients (Freud) and prisoners (Foucault), and reflecting on the difficulties besetting agency. Each scholar attends to the psychological and political dimensions of personhood crucial to projects of political subjectivity and agency. Neither Freud nor Foucault denies the force, fortunate or not, of absolute moral claims and principles. Instead, they teach their readers how these moral values raise local, particular problems, problems that are no less worthy of being attended to for their failure to be transcendent. No cure, then, but care.

At the same time (and second), this book is not a pallid retreat to reformism. It is not content to rattle the bars of the modern liberal, capitalist cage and to say that the best we can hope for is to muddle along.

[5] Richard Rorty, "Freud, Morality and Hermeneutics," *New Literary History* 12(1): 177–85, 177.

Instead it seeks to scaffold these practices into an interpretive architecture that can guide political engagements. Toward this end, it first analyzes how the interpretive framework symbolized by this cage has become entrenched; then, how the political and ethical practices that support both have become eviscerated; and finally, how we might use this "hollowing out" to move away from diagnostic and therapeutic moments toward something more generative. Where much of the work on "practices of the self" has developed an aesthetic project around the "arts of living," the present book seeks a more clearly political context for projects of self-cultivation. Aesthetic projects are not divorced from politics. Their political force relies on their ability to return to politics from an embodied experience so as to tell a new story about old hierarchies in a way that can compel innovative political response. My project seeks exactly this effect. In turning to the unusual sites of psychoanalysis and "fearless speech" (*parrhesia*), I acknowledge that these spaces unavoidably bear the traces of broader political and cultural structures. The dynamics of these spaces, however, seek to make their inhabitants more self-reflexive about these structures, their effects, and any accompanying uncertainties.

Moving beyond the failures of liberal politics cannot only be a question of interpretation; it will also require tremendous change to political, social, and especially economic structures. Addressing those structures lies beyond the scope of this book. The marker of the post-liberal age is that we have come to subjectivize our ethical responses to structural problems (by framing in terms of identity the questions: What is to be done? How ought I to act?). If so, then we need to begin with where we are. We need to begin with those practices – at once personal and collective, subjective and political – that might move us past those vulnerabilities that threaten agency. And so I turn to the language of authorship and authority for the architecture of a "way out."

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The frontispiece is Moritz von Schwind's *The Prisoner's Dream* (1836). Source: Schack-Galerie, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen/Art Resource, NY. This image was also the frontispiece to Freud's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. Permission granted by Art Resource.

The cover image is Pablo Picasso's *Child Playing with Truck* (1953). From Musée Picasso, Paris, France; Photo Credit: RMN-Grand Palais/ Gérard Blot/Art Resource, NY. Permission granted by the Picasso Administration/ARS.

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# Abbreviations

In the pages that follow, certain texts are cited frequently. The references to these standard, scholarly editions have been shortened.

| | |
|---|---|
| *CT* | *Courage of the Truth* |
| *DE 1* | *Dits et Écrits, volume 1 (French edition)* |
| *DE 11* | *Dits et Écrits, volume 11 (French edition)* |
| *GS* | *Government of the Self and Others* |
| *HS 1* | *History of Sexuality, volume 1* |
| *SE* | *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* |

1

# Authority and Its Discontents

## Asking What Is Authority?

Contemporary politics has become paralyzed before two conflicting views. On the one hand, politics in the post–World War Two period is frequently taken to be a question of technocratic administration. On the other hand, citizens also believe that contemporary politics has an ineluctable psycho-social component best understood on the terms of personal identity.[1] The result is a citizenry caught between tendencies toward overstabilization and self-disintegration. Any response to the current paralysis needs to acknowledge the hold that these views have on current political

[1] One of the early reviews of *Nomos 1: Authority* nicely captures early understandings of this dilemma: "In a world of 'Hidden Persuaders' by television, radio, and press and in the age of what has been termed 'Organization Man,' the problem of the nature and extent of authority is a fascinating one; indeed it may well be one which must be solved if society is not to be replaced by the anarchy of liberalism," (p. 205). B. A. Wortley, "Review, *Nomos 1 Authority*" *International Affairs* 35.2 (April 1959): 205. Some thirty years later, in *Nomos: Authority Revisited*, another reviewer will note the paradoxical implications of Frederick Schauer's analysis – namely that "the absence of shared values makes the indeterminacy of our ideals, our laws, and our political process necessary and valuable. Yet that very ambiguity tends to increase the latitude of those in authority, thereby at least potentially endangering the flexibility [so] … prize[d]" (p. 163). James T. Kloppenberg, "Review: Nomos 29: Authority Revisited," *Ethics* 99.1 (October 1988): 163–4. More recently, the 1970s debates between Habermas and Niklas Luhmann attest to the contentiousness over the place for "system" and "rational political steering" in contemporary politics; Foucault's work on governmentality and biopower turned to the increasing significance of techniques of "managerial administration" to manage "populations"; and more recent scholars, across a range of interpretive traditions, identify an eviscerated politics that leads each to charge the other with offering "a rather bloodless conception of participation" (Norval, p. 239). Aletta Norval, "Democratic Identification: A Wittgensteinian Approach," *Political Theory* 34.2 (April 2006): 229–55.

practices, and to take them as the starting point for the reconstruction of something new.

Freud and Foucault are not often associated with this challenge; indeed they are most readily recognized as diagnosticians of the political and cultural processes that have created it. Counterintuitively, then, this book will draw on both thinkers toward thinking beyond the impasse surrounding political judgment and agency just outlined. I locate two models for such practices of self-formation in Sigmund Freud's writings on psychoanalytic technique and Michel Foucault's unpublished lectures on the ancient ethical practices of "fearless speech," or *parrhesia*. My goal with these models is not, in a literal sense, to argue that all moderns should seek the authoritative intervention of a psychoanalyst or "truth-teller." Rather, these culturally salient figures of psychoanalyst and truth-teller are the nodal points between self-governance and political governance; the educative relationships they sustain actually nourish the psychological, ethical, and cultural dimensions of *political* authority. By analyzing the practices that underlie political authority, this book thus engages classic concerns about subject-formation, to argue that authority derives from a risky exchange modeled on that between educator and student. It is a model that prepares for a no less dynamic exchange between rulers and ruled. The book seeks a more supple understanding of the modern ethical subject and new grounds on which to revisit the seemingly bankrupt concepts of political authority, trust, and truth-telling.

Contemporary thinkers of the post-war period have become habituated to raising these questions of subject-formation and agency in the context of "power" rather than of "authority." The post-war period grappled with the increasingly incontrovertible evidence that boundaries between different domains of knowledge, justification, and order had become blurred. Not only was there no singular order to draw together law, morality, and politics, but the bodies of authoritative knowledge that sustained these (science, literature, history) strained against one another.[2] Appeals to "authority," then, often read as efforts to ignore these disjunctures and instead to appeal conservatively to prior authorizations. Where

[2] This gloss of modern authority draws on several accounts, but especially that of Jacques Rancière. In casting "the crisis of authority" as one in which authority can no longer move easily between domains of justification, I draw on Rancière's *The Names of History*. Rancière broadly characterizes the crisis of authority in terms of a crisis of evidence. He broadly identifies two epistemologies – scientific modes, that seek intelligibility; and literary modes, that explore opacity – and argues that the discipline of history and the practice of politics are pressed to adjudicate their claims. Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, trans. Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

the concept of "authority" often implied a relatively fixed and unchanging order, the vocabulary of "power" was made for cutting: cutting through the pettifoggery of elite politics, through the veneer of a normal politics, through the sediment of unexamined modes of political thought and practice. "Power" also spoke to a palpable sense of constraint (implicit or explicit) often inadequately addressed by classically liberal theories of consent most often associated with political authority.

As a result, the concept of authority has fallen out of fashion. Its prognosis in the twentieth century was bleak from the beginning: the first volume of *Nomos*, devoted to its study, opened with Hannah Arendt's asking "What *was* Authority?" Although she later changed the title of her essay in response to the consternation of her colleagues, she preserved her thesis that with the demise of religion and tradition, authority had lost two legitimizing bulwarks key for its survival in the modern world. She mourned modernity's untethered condition, and the world in which religion and tradition were to be unavailable as anchors. Both within that essay and in the Preface to its publication in *Between Past and Future*, Arendt casts the demise of authority in terms of the ethical ambiguities it provokes. *Our history was left to us by no testament*, she writes, citing poet and Resistance fighter René Char's words penned in the aftermath of World War Two.[3] Religion and tradition once provided a framework by which we could elevate constraints (such as those posed by people, events, imperatives) above the mundane level of necessity. Such constraints are constraints on the freedom of our actions, our thoughts, our will; transgressing such constraints can provoke blame, while respecting them provokes responsibility. Bereft of any clear terms of entailment from these previous frameworks for order, Arendt urges that we must take on a new way of "settling down in the gap between past and future."[4] Through

[3] Readers may know of René Char because of his participation in the French Resistance, during which he gave up writing poetry. Others may recognize this epigram as the sentence that opens the Preface of Arendt's *Between Past and Future*, or Char's reference to "lost treasure" that closes her *On Revolution*. Fewer likely know of Char's personal connection to Foucault. Foucault cites Char in his earliest writings, and on the back inside cover to the final two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* series reads the inscription "The history of men is the long sequence of synonyms for a single term. Contradicting it is a duty." The two were also personal friends. Four lines from the "Demi-jour en Creuse," a poem that Char penned four days before Foucault's death, and dedicated to Foucault, were read at Foucault's funeral. I reference this epigram because its content resonates with Foucault's own preoccupations with history and because its association with Arendt brings this pre-occupation more clearly in line with American political theory.

[4] Hannah Arendt, "Preface: The Gap Between Past and Future," in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 13.

"constant practices and exercises," Arendt suggests, we can perhaps recalibrate our ethical and political responses to history and constraint and begin the slow, patient labor of building a new relation to authority. What these practices and exercises might be, how they come to be collectively authoritative, and the substance of the ethics and politics they offer is left for others to determine. Arendt claims only that they might help us moderns with "the elementary problems of human living-together"[5] – suggesting that these practices back away from any grand political program.

The post-war juncture shared by Arendt and Char crystallized a problem that has since become more diffuse: the challenge of making ethical judgments of power and politics in the absence of shared public contexts. A crisis of authority emerged as the incongruities among different domains of justification (and most notably science, literature, law) became more apparent. With no singular domain of authority to which to appeal, ethical judgments faltered before incompatible standards of evidence and criteria of evaluation.[6] Vichy France, with its ineluctable disjunct between official and unofficial public space, became an instructive example. As Arendt tells the story, Char and his fellow members of the French Resistance "without premonition and probably against their conscious inclinations… had come to constitute willy-nilly a public realm where – without the paraphernalia of officialdom and hidden from the eyes of friend and foe – all relevant business in the affairs of the country was transacted in word and deed."[7] Arendt's characterization of this extraordinary politics is of a politics reduced to its elemental components of words and deeds, but one that leaves open the question of how such words and deeds might be evaluated without the interpretive frameworks offered by political institutions, public openness, and ethical principle. In short, it leaves open the question of authority and authorization in the modern world. Post-Vichy, the absence of clear public space persists. The Vichy period suggests that authority cannot be equated either to public office or to moral puritanism; few political moments offer such clarity of political or moral purpose. Where political theory – even much of twentieth century thought, broadly speaking – has faltered is in framing authority

[5] Arendt, "What is Authority," p. 141.

[6] In making these broad claims, I have relied on the original essays to the *Nomos* volume on authority, but especially Carl Friedrich, "Authority, Reason, and Discretion," and Charles Hendel, "An Exploration of the Nature of Authority," *Nomos I: Authority* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1958). From the more recent *Nomos: Authority Revisited*, I draw on Frederick Schauer, "Authority and Indeterminacy."

[7] Hannah Arendt, "Preface: The Gap Between Past and Future," in *Between Past and Present: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 3.

on terms other than those of positive political program. Unconvinced that distinctions between legitimate authority and illegitimate power do anything beyond conserving the status quo, contemporary scholars have abandoned the language of authority. Instead, the dominant turn has been to relations of power: to conceive of the contemporary world as so saturated with relations of power that people, claims, and events cannot be understood on any other terms.

In a political context fixated on power, practices of trust and truth-telling would seem to have no clear place. And indeed, claims to trust and truth-telling – claims that would normally sustain the legitimacy of authority – have become empty markers, mere veiled invocations of power. Where trust generally sustains social interactions in the face of generational change, unpredictability, and despite the momentary ruptures from the occasional broken promise or betrayal, it permits us to regulate attachments broadly speaking. Irreducible to simple instrumentalism, trust smooths over the uncertainties of exchange by reminding those involved that trusting behaviors enable them to pursue other shared values of community. For trust to achieve this effect, individuals need to be able to regulate not just attachment but claims to speak truthfully. Absent such trust, an approach to politics in terms of "power" could draw on the clarifying force of contest. Where a contestatory politics relies on the stark potency of claim-making, not all political exchanges are or ought be adversarial nor can they always rely on fair "rules of the game" to adjudicate contest. Cultivating a politics rich in texture and generative in project requires equally cultivating political strategies of negotiation, imagination, revision, and critique. To reduce truth claims to power is to truncate the potential for an ethical cultivation of person or community. As practices of trust and truth-telling become eviscerated through suspicion, it becomes impossible to speak meaningfully about authority, the process of legitimation, or even the collective of political community. Losing the vocabulary of authority narrows the possible relationships for ruling and being ruled into ones of simple command and obedience. And yet as the wartime Resistance made poignantly and painfully apparent, trust and truth-telling are the conditions of political freedom.

What I, following Arendt, have termed the challenge of "settling in the gap between past and future" has since been taken to characterize a larger swath of the western world than just post-war France. To reiterate the dilemma posed in the Preface, contemporary social and political theory has reached an impasse about a problem that had once seemed straightforward: how can individuals make ethical judgments about power and politics? Despite the ethical urgency that inflected political thought in the

wake of World War Two, critical social and political theory – from the Frankfurt School to radical pluralists to Foucault – has offered a largely pessimistic response. Uncertain of what might serve as foundations for governance, however provisional, political theorists have instead used the attention to power to focus more narrowly on questions of identity and self-formation. Ever-mindful of politics' capacity for violence, most accounts of identity-formation have come to focus on individuals as thoroughly defined by injury, trauma, or loss; as a result, such persons are mired in the suspicion that claims to truth merely mask claims to power. Despite the impressive critiques offered of concepts central to liberal politics – freedom, equality, justice – and their political instantiations, contemporary politics still struggles to adapt these critiques for political practice in a way that does not deliver them back into the pathologies of liberalism. A new set of "constant practices and exercises" has yet to coherently emerge within the shells of these increasingly hollow structures so as to give them new force and meaning. As the extraordinary context of the post-war period fades, the trust and truth-telling necessary to a democratic politics seem foreclosed in advance.

For scholars thinking in terms of power, two responses initially seem possible. First, it might appear that individuals need new or better knowledge of what it means to speak of "ethical responsibility"; with new and sufficient self-knowledge, self-examination, or empathetic self-extension they might re-attach themselves differently to the world and claim ethical responsibility for their actions rather than sinking into nihilism or apathy.[8] Or, second, it might appear that the challenge is to liberate individuals

[8] Those who, in different ways, emphasize the need for greater knowledge of self and context include Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1986); Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1992). This is the audience most clearly claimed by Foucault whose death interrupted plans for a public debate "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?" involving himself, Habermas, Charles Taylor, Richard Rorty, Hubert Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow. Among those thinkers who turn to different forms of self-examination include scholars writing in the perfectionist tradition, such as Stanley Cavell, David Owen, and Tracy Strong. And those who advocate an empathetic self-extension are generally grouped under the aegis of "cosmopolitanism," including Martha Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenist Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006); *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Gillian Brock and Harry Brighouse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and critiqued by Seyla Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism: Hospitality, Sovereignty, and Democratic Iterations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

from exhausted taboos, impediments to transgression, or the discipline of expertise.[9] These two responses suggest either a renewed commitment to ethical responsibility or a radical politics that would make a strong break with the past. The drawback with either response is the heavy burden placed on individuals to disavow what came before and to begin anew.

Neither response adequately addresses the present rupture between truth-telling and ethics that impedes political action, and so each leaves individuals at a loss as to where to begin. Both responses are in some ways necessary: they school citizens to various "readings" of politics that are readings of critique and resistance. They chart the distinction between ethical person and persona; between political actuality and legal fiction; between ideology and truth-telling. But by leaving political resistance bottled between these various conceptual distinctions they fail to teach individuals how to leverage and direct this resistance into political transformation. To do so would require a more fine-grained analysis of what might serve as Arendt's "constant practices and exercises" necessary to settle in the gap between past and future.

More than an incidental ethical uncertainty or political instability, settling in the gap between past and future evokes a completion of the Pythian transfer of responsibility for human deeds from some external – God, Nature, tradition, custom, and so forth – to human community. This transfer does not leave the substance of ethics and politics untouched. Giving up on external sources of authority means turning to human relationships instead for the resources that might identify some claims to authority as legitimate and others not. The utter failure of Vichy France underscores the need to identify relations of authority not reducible to

[9] Such a tradition, defined genealogically, varies in its juxtaposition of taboo and liberation. It might claim heritage in J. S. Mill's and Nietzsche's very different arguments against the moral and political implications of social conformity. Early interlocutors with Freud emphasized the reading of psychoanalysis as an ambivalent tool for liberation. See, for example, Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America* (1965) and *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979); Paul Roazen, *Freud: Political and Social Thought* (New York: Knopf Books, 1968); Jeffrey Abramson, *Liberation and its Limits* (New York: Free Press, 1984). In subsequent and critical response came those who write in the post-structuralist tradition – thinkers with whom I will be arguing both with and against over the course of this book. These include Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2002); Shoshana Felman, *The Scandal of the Speaking Body,* 2nd edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Still others have concentrated on the effect of expertise on public institutions, including James Chriss, *Counseling and the Therapeutic State* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 1999); James Nolan, *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Andrew Polsky, *The Rise of the Therapeutic State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

those of power, to elaborate practices that are more than just personal ones, and to achieve these while breaking with a present that defends itself with the presumed legitimacy of the past. The language of "practices of the self" reframes these relationships and their sense of interpretive agency. Over the course of this book I will argue that we should rethink authority as drawing on three, imperfectly overlapping relationships – relations to oneself, to others, and to truth-telling – that compose the context in which ethical and political engagement will unfold. That these tasks should be undertaken in a democratic political community, in which claims to rule must be balanced against the formal equality of all members adds another challenge: to ensure that any asymmetry in these relationships does not entrench harm and hierarchy.

Asymmetrical relationships thus offer the best context in which to disaggregate and analyze those practices that bind trust, truth-telling, and authority. This book takes as its premise the notion that ethical selfhood is not displayed through a solitary confrontation of self and order. Instead, selfhood emerges through personal relationships toward others, relationships that gain in cultural significance as they are refracted through symbolic authorities such as doctors and educators. Sometimes these relationships cause harm. But, under certain conditions, they nourish. They are at their best when they draw on those "practices of the self" that educate individuals in a self-authorship resistant to being overwritten by cultural narratives.

Toward this end, this book first analyzes those relationships to cultural figures of authority from which might arise a new ethical subjectivity and political engagement. Surprisingly, I find resources for theorizing such relationships in two unlikely thinkers – Sigmund Freud and Michel Foucault – who are most often assimilated to the posture of hermeneutic suspicion. These authoritative relationships – namely, Freud's figure of the psychoanalyst and Foucault's ancient truth-teller – make risk and resistance productive of relations of trust and truth-telling (and so of ethical subjectivity) rather than injurious. I thus offer a claim different from previous thinkers: that individuals are not passive subjects of injury, but rather that their selfhood emerges from their ability to risk authority themselves. By "risk authority" I mean that individuals exercise the capacity to risk the authorship of their own words and deeds, despite uncertainties of context and consequence. Risk becomes not a generic quality of circumstance but part of a structural dynamic that sets these relations to symbolic authorities apart from others more quotidian. To

work through these structural dynamics, I examine in turn the relationships to authority and to oneself offered first by Freud and then Foucault; the second part of this book then considers how these relations open onto ones of truth-telling, and the extent to which they might be adapted – or not – for politics. The language of adaptation suggests that the practices used to author ourselves might, with some adjustment, be deployed toward the interpretation of people, claims, and events in politics as well. More than a philosophic approach to authoring and reading texts, such interpretive authority enables us to read and authorize the political context in which we find ourselves.

Arendt herself would never conceive these practices of the self on quite these terms, and certainly not through reference to Freud and Foucault.[10] After all, in *The Human Condition* she associates the abandonment of the political realm with the flight outward beyond human community (through over-reliance on science and technology) and the flight inward (towards a self-absorption masquerading as self-reflexivity). Any "practices of the self" associated with Freud – known for his embrace of science over religion – would seem complicit in the flight outward; Foucault's turn to the ancient world of the Hellenists – a time of evaporating public space and corrupted empire – would seem complicit in the flight inward. Yet I would argue that Arendt's own dismissal of what she terms "the social," as well as her historical situation before the emergence of contemporary identity-politics, prevented her from recognizing that any response to the seeming loss of authority would need to confront

[10] Hannah Arendt was notoriously dismissive of Freud and psychoanalysis; both could be considered complicit in the "flight inwards" of personal retreat from politics, or with the "flight outwards" towards scientific mastery of the world. In opening this book with Arendt, then, I am not flat-footedly claiming that Freud anticipated Arendt's thought nor that Foucault concluded it. I am, however, proposing that when read alongside one another, Freud and Foucault offer a surprising engagement with Arendt's own concerns about authority, legitimacy, and liberty. I would also note that her dislike for Freud notwithstanding, Hannah Arendt was awarded the 1967 Sigmund Freud Prize awarded by the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung for those adepts at German prose. I would further remark that my reading of Freud and Foucault alongside Arendt on questions of authority echoes some of the reflections raised in Julia Kristeva's 2006 address to the award committee at Bremen upon receipt of the Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought. Kristeva, herself a psychoanalyst, uses "Hannah Arendt or Refoundation as Survival" to bring Arendt and Freud together on questions of the in-between space of human interaction, the use of narrative to structure and reflect on these interactions, and the sense that truth-telling is more than a retreat into individual worlds of meaning. These are also the themes to be teased out in the pages that follow.

exactly the phenomena whose existence she so lamented.[11] Some fifty years after *The Human Condition*, it is now easier to concede that contemporary identity politics has had a powerful influence on contemporary western politics. Nonetheless, it has also reached a philosophic dead end in framing identity as caught in a stand-off between self and political order. Backing out of the current political paralysis, however, and reinvigorating practices of trust and truth-telling can no longer *begin* with the reinvigoration of the public realm – although such practices seek, optimistically, to end there. Instead, it begins with the recognition that the history entailed to us presently includes the widespread conviction that politics is a question of technocratic administration, and the somewhat conflicting view that politics has an ineluctable psycho-social component associated with personal identity. Any response to the current paralysis needs to acknowledge the hold that these views have on current political practices, and to take these as the starting point for the reconstruction of something new.

## Psychoanalysis and *Parrhesia* as Authoritative Practices

On these questions of speech, trust, truth-telling, and politics, Sigmund Freud and Michel Foucault have come to be paradigmatic figures in twentieth-century political thought. As they are standardly read, Freud has provided a confessional account of how psychology takes on moral content; Foucault, a powerful critique of how this psychology has become

[11] Arendt's uneasy relationship to "the social" is treated in Hanna Pitkin's *The Attack of the Blob* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Pitkin – no stranger to psychoanalysis – argues in the final pages that "the problem of the social, however, is that people *are* power without *having* it, that even the 'powerful,' whose decisions affect hundreds of thousands, are unable to alter the inertial drift as long as everyone keeps doing as we now do" (p. 282). While I have my quarrels with Pitkin's reading of Arendt, Pitkin's book has become a common reference for subsequent reflection on Arendt and the social. A number of thinkers have since sought to incorporate various concerns for social identity into an Arendtian framework of politics. For an interesting reading of Arendt through psychoanalytic categories, see Linda Zerilli, "The Arendtian Body" in ed. Bonnie Honig, *Feminist Interpretations of Arendt* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). Others who have engaged with Arendt on this point include Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); the contributors to *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Dana Villa, *Politics, Philosophy and Terror* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Norma Claire Moruzzi, *Speaking through the Mask: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Social Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

generative of political policies and practices. Less well-known are other claims and writings that might place the two in unlikely conversation with one another on this single dimension of modern authority. Insofar as both Freud and Foucault both explore the limits of authority and ethics through speech, as well as the process that prepares individuals for such investigations, their authoritative figures of psychoanalyst and ancient truth-teller (*parrhesiastes*) are particularly suited to the practices of the self outlined here. Both thinkers analyze the structural dynamics of relationships to authority that seek to generate their own norms of evaluation; each seeks differently to bind individuals and collectivities through a set of mediating practices. Freud's psychoanalyst provides a new language and diagnostic method through which individuals can make meaning out of contingency and assess the worth of their life in the face of death. Differently from other doctors called upon to cure modernity's ills, the psychoanalyst emphasizes the interpretive element of any diagnosis as well as the practices of self-governance needed to manage psychic tensions and resistances. Like the psychoanalyst, Foucault's truth-teller, rooted in several models culled from ancient Greece and Rome, prepares others for self-governance; these educators teach a set of practices by which individuals can assess the claims of authoritative others who offer models for ethical living.[12]

Even so, it may seem rather surprising to see Freud and Foucault paired in this manner, or even that they be paired together at all. Within the context of political theory, Freud is generally treated in terms of his claims about culture and politics that are developed most notably in his later writings such as *Civilization and its Discontents*, *Future of an Illusion*, *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*. In his lifetime, Freud's cultural writings were associated with a naïve scientism that vaunted itself over the illusions of religion and instead elevated

[12] The references to follow are from two series of lectures, *Le Gouvernement du soi* and *Le Courage de la vérité*, presented at the Collège de France during the 1982–83 and 1983–84 academic years. These lectures are available at IMEC (l'Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine). Between October 2002 and December 2003, I listened to these audiocassette and CD recordings and made complete transcriptions in the original French. These lectures have since been published as *The Government of Self and Others* and *The Courage of the Truth*. My citations are to the published versions; in places where I believe the translation inflects the understanding of key concepts, I include my translation and the French version of the phrase in question. Such citations will indicate the appropriate lecture date and CD number; the English translations are my own. Similar content is covered in the six lectures on *parrhesia* that Foucault gave at Berkeley during the same period. These lectures have been published in the volume *Fearless Speech* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 2001).

"private" sexual identity to political status. From some of these works, political thinkers in the 1960s such as Paul Roazen and Philip Rieff have distilled an account of society's necessarily repressive force that protects individuals from themselves by restraining unruly sexual passions.[13] Political society, by this account, comes at the cost of psychological and sexual repression. Other seminal works – such as Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, and Carole Pateman's *The Sexual Contract* – critique Freud's contribution to constrictive patriarchal or capitalist structures and advocate varied rebellions to or liberations from such structures.[14] Political theorists thus missed the turn to "relationships" among practicing psychoanalysts to orient a self-formation over-determined neither by trauma nor dominant social conventions.[15]

On Foucault's part, as a result of his own contributions to critiques of psychoanalysis – and especially his stinging account of psychoanalysis in the first volume of *History of Sexuality* – Foucault is usually considered a strident intellectual opponent of Freud's.[16] This image persists despite Foucault's dual degrees in psychology and philosophy – degrees that neatly mirror Freud's own degrees in biology and philosophy – that prompted him to frequent the psychological hospital of Sainte Anne in Paris and to write an extensive introduction on existentialist psychology

[13] See Paul Roazen, *Freud: Political and Social Thought* (New York: Knopf Books, 1968); Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of a Moralist* (New York: Doubleday Books, 1961); and John Schaar's critique of Erich Fromm's more radical attempt to oppose psychoanalysis and authority in *Escape from Authority* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).

[14] See Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Viking Press, 1977); Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

[15] I will discuss the development of the relational school of psychoanalysis in more detail in Chapter 2. Briefly, the relational school focuses on the formative effects of personal relationships both in childhood and as carried over and repeated into adulthood. Growing out of British object-relations theory (which focuses on processes of internalization), the relational school coalesced around the work of Lewis Aron, Jessica Benjamin, Nancy Chodorow, Stephen Mitchell, Otto Renik, Mitchell Wilson, and others. For a history of psychoanalysis in America, see Nathan Hale, *Freud in America*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). For more specific information on the relational school, see Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America* (New York: Perseus Publishing, 1996); Stephen Mitchell and Lewis Aron, *Relational Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of a Tradition* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1999).

[16] See, for example, Maurice Blanchot's *Foucault as I Imagine Him,* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Zone Books, 1987); Jacques-Alain Miller, "Michel Foucault and Psychoanalysis," in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992).

for Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*.[17] Instead, from *The History of Madness* onward, Foucault is most often associated with his claim that the discourse of psychoanalysis contributes to broader tendencies of social "normalization," and that this drive towards normalization has transformed politics into a managerial science.

Other writings from both thinkers – Freud's papers on psychoanalytic technique, Foucault's more "literary" earlier works and his "aesthetic" later works – thus came to be downplayed as not explicitly contributing to serious thinking on politics. Freud's papers on technique were either dismissed entirely or folded into critiques of his putative scientism and the professionalization of matters of personal identity.[18] Both Freud's and Foucault's writings on literature were considered of interest only to those who recklessly sought to marry aesthetic and political concerns. As a result of this sharp divorce of aesthetics and politics, much recent work on power and identity draws on the standard readings of Freud and Foucault to find trust, truth, and authority to be all but culturally extinct. Although I ultimately resist the aesthetic reading of these thinkers to insist that their real contribution is to the psychodynamics of authoritative political interactions, these oft-dismissed readings are central to my claims. My analysis recovers a place for these in contemporary theory and politics through the elaboration of "practices of the self."[19] These practices emerge within those interpersonal relationships that educate

[17] Foucault's first university post in Lille required him to teach psychology to philosophy students. His often over-looked "first books" include a 128-page introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* and *Mental Illness and Psychology,* a book commissioned for the "Initiation Philosophique" series from PUF (Presse Universitaire de France). Foucault gives no reference to these in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France (published as *L'Ordre du discours*) and instead claims *Madness and Civilization* as his first book. Foucault's engagement with psychology and psychoanalysis is treated in chapter 3 of David Macey's *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993). For other biographical details, see Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

[18] Stephen Mitchell helpfully distinguishes between the tensions between scientism and science in Freud's initial reception. Psychoanalysis, as conceived by Freud, is torn between scientific and literary ambitions whose claims and evidence strain against one another. Freud works hard to protect psychoanalysis from a vulgar scientism that leverages scientific jargon to shore up intellectual position. The distinction between scientism and science, however, was lost on Freud's early audience skeptical of psychoanalytic authority. Stephen Mitchell, "Knowledge and Authority in the Analytic Relationship," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 67 (1998): 1–31.

[19] My use of the term derives from its earlier use by French scholars including Pierre Hadot and his American interlocutor Arnold Davidson, as well as from its earlier application to French thought by Harvey Goldman.

individuals for ethical agency – the give-and-take of this education conduces to an agency that arises from suspicion and critique but finishes in trust and truth-telling. Unexpectedly, these intimate relationships are the very ones that condition impersonal political structures of authority; they enable the ethical work of self-cultivation and assessment to be adapted for the evaluation and exchange of politics. More than artless advice on daily living, these practices stabilize those political and epistemological claims that give meaning to life lived within human community.

Drawing on only recently published archival materials, *Crisis of Authority* thus locates two models for such practices in Freud's writings on psychoanalytic technique and Foucault's lectures on the ancients. It gives pre-eminent attention to Freud's writings on psychoanalytic training and technique[20] – writings usually overlooked by both political theorists and ethicists – as well as to the late lectures of Foucault given at the Collège de France between 1980 and 1984.

Freud's writings on technique evince a delicate concern for the analyst's authoritative position and diagnostic technique, as well as for the analyst's role in recasting the effects of other authorities on this individual.[21] Initially intended as counsel for would-be psychoanalysts, they say much about managing the transference relationship, about psychoanalysis's speech of indirection, of the timing and pace to be sought for an ideal–typical analytic session. Yet reading them as an instruction manual would be a mistake. In contrast to presenting the stylized facts, Freud abjured the faith in scientific method that would make psychoanalysts into

[20] As such, my work draws on that of Freud scholars such as Jonathan Lear, Sarah Kofman, Arnold Davidson, and Marcia Cavell, and more distantly on works by philosopher Richard Rorty.

[21] In focusing primarily on psychoanalytic practice and Freud's papers on technique, I set aside psychoanalytic cultural theories, and specifically those pertaining to the Law. Psychoanalysts draw a clear distinction between theory and practice, and emphasize that good clinical practice proceeds through induction (rather than deduced from a particular theory). Practice or specific techniques may be guided by theory but are not logically derived from it. Since psychoanalytic practice has a primarily therapeutic goal, analysts are reluctant to draw too strict a correspondence between theories of the mind and treatment of patients. Clearly the distinction is not absolute, and indeed psychoanalysts debate vigorously what is and ought be the relationship between clinical practice and theoretical elaboration. The interaction of psychoanalytic theory and practice might be better understood as offering different models or "metaphoric approximations" (Fonagy, p. 35) – a vocabulary consonant with Foucault's "modes of thinking" and "manners of thinking" and with my own turn to models and metaphors. For further reading, see Peter Fonagy's lead article "Some Complexities in the Relationship of Psychoanalytic Theory to Technique" in the January 2003 issue of *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* dedicated to this topic.

surgeons of the soul, able to rely on the stringency of technique to surmount the particularisms of person. A few basic rules – that psychoanalysis cost money, that each session last exactly fifty minutes, that patients free-associate – provide the contours for something closer to the "moral topography" that Charles Taylor takes as the necessary context for moving ethics beyond the iteration of rules.[22] Within this highly specific terrain, individuals engage in the work of *Nacherziehung*, a "second-" or "after-education" that reworks existing psychic and ethical structures to lessen the grip of past legacies and dismantle their failed constructions so as to open up space for a "new reconstruction." Knowing their widest diffusion in Freud's lifetime, these essays traverse the boundary between psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice that might make them less a staged scene of confession or address and more a scene of enactment.[23] The pressure of psychoanalytic dialogue is always toward the enactment of convictions past, present, and future through both explicit claim and ill-understood implication.[24] Differently from other dialogic encounters, the case histories that display these techniques have a life beyond the pages that bind author and reader. The psychoanalytic hermeneutic

[22] Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[23] Subsequent work in psychoanalysis has developed traditional categories of Freudian psychoanalysis into a richer theory of enactment. For a good introductory overview of the history and practitioners behind these changes, see Lewis Aron, "The Paradoxical Place for Enactment" in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13: 623–631. The April 2003 issue of *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* offers a symposium devoted to these questions of enactment. Other touchstone works include Sándor Ferenczi, *Clinical Diary*, ed. Judith DuPont, trans. Michael Balint and Nicola Zarday Jackson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995 [1932]); Theodore Jacobs, "On Countertransference Enactments," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, April 1986, 34: 289–307; Hans Loewald, "Psychoanalysis as an Art and the Fantasy Character of the Psychoanalytic Situation," in *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); James T. McLaughlin, "Transference, Psychic Reality, and Countertransference," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 50 (1981): 639–64; Lewis Aron, *A Meeting of Minds: Mutuality in Psychoanalysis* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1996); Lewis Aron and Stephen Mitchell, eds., *Relational Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of a Tradition* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press,1999). Some of these works will be touched on in subsequent chapters of this book, but especially in Chapters 2 and 3.

[24] These words will ring differently in the ears of psychoanalysts than those of political theorists. Like classical psychoanalysis, my reading of Freud draws heavily on an appreciation for the interpretive dimension of psychoanalysis; like contemporary psychoanalysis (both clinical and theoretical work in various traditions), I further recognize that a rigid distinction between speech and action cannot be maintained and that "implications" or subtext often drive the psychoanalytic scene of encounter. For more on this interplay, see Anthony Bass, "'E' Enactments in Psychoanalysis: Another Medium, Another Message," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13(5): 657–675, 2003.

setting is complicated: it nests the sacral interactions between analyst and patient within the arcana of daily life, and these within the pedagogical relationship between Freud and his own audience – psychoanalysts, Viennese medical authorities, lay persons – that asks audience members to rotate through the roles of analyst and patient themselves.

Foucault's lectures themselves demonstrate a striking turn away from a critique of the union of power and knowledge in modern society, and a turn toward practices of truth-telling that aim to establish trustworthy individual and collective practices of governance. In his work on *parrhesia*, or "fearless speech," Foucault focuses on the Epicurean, Stoic, and Cynic texts centered on the elaboration of those personal relationships that bear on self-formation. Foucault uses these texts in an effort to disentangle a genre of frank speech distinct from rhetorical persuasion[25], one that instead seeks to train individuals to establish in their lives a "harmony of word and deeds" through a dynamic, risky encounter with an educative truth-teller (*parrhesiastes*). Much like Freud, Foucault gives primary attention to the effects of those techniques used by the educator to manifest and express his authority, rather than relying on institutional position. That Foucault's work on the ancients mimics the parrhesiastic relationship between speakers and listeners demands that both his immediate audience at the Collège de France, and his posthumous archival audience, engage in the very arts on which he lectures.

Once again, my aim with these models is not to suggest that all moderns should seek the authoritative intervention of a psychoanalyst or truth-teller (*parrhesiastes*). Instead, as I shall argue in the chapters that follow, these culturally salient figures of psychoanalyst and truth-teller are the nodal points that bind self- and political governance; their educative relationships foster the psychological, ethical, and cultural dimensions of political authority broadly speaking. By so situating Freud and Foucault, my account seeks to move past intellectual history and to resolve tensions in their work at more than the level of biography. More than a turn to over-looked and under-appreciated materials, my account calls attention to an organizing tension within the modern crisis of authority:

[25] Foucault's claim that *parrhesia* is not rhetoric is sure to strike classicists as misguided. After all, for *parrhesia* to be recognized as such by both audience and practitioners suggests that it is recognizably distinct from others genres of speech (sophistry, oration, etc.). In distinguishing *parrhesia* from rhetoric, Foucault merely wants to indicate it as "unadorned" speech with a different relationship to sincerity. As will be discussed later on at length, *parrhesia* nonetheless continues to operate according to a set of conventions designed to provoke a certain audience response.

an inability to reconcile the structural problems of contemporary politics with the insistence on framing these on psychological terms. For all that contemporary theorists characterize the crises of modernity on structural terms (e.g., captured by technologies of discipline, or mired in late capitalism or the iron cage as Marx and Weber would have it), we theorists tend to frame our response on subjective terms. We appeal to ethical dispositions, political engagement, selfhood, tolerance, and responsiveness as the first steps toward overcoming these problems – despite lacking a clear sense of how such subjective experiences could connect to collective practices.

These concerns about authority, selfhood, and politics span a number of overlapping debates, each of which has sought to clarify some aspect of power and authority, or subjectivity and agency. In the pages that follow, I will chart how each of these efforts offered an initial insight, then faltered, and eventually reached an impasse in framing judgments on power and politics. I will begin with the literatures on authorship and authority. Political theorists are most familiar with the longstanding literature that has sought to distinguish analytically the categories of *power* and *authority*. Initially, the language of "power" offered insight into the epistemological and political categories of rule. It promised to set aside unstable distinctions between power, violence, and authority and to capture the potency of "real politics." Acknowledgement of the epistemological and political instabilities of these concepts finished (first) by being "rather vague"[26] and unable to clarify how concepts could illuminate practice. With the recognition that not all relations of asymmetry are ones of harm, came (second) the turn to exemplarity. Theorists of exemplarity emphasized both the vividness of moral presence, and its ability to draw on the potency of contextual example rather than on moral rule. They successfully sought to recover the context of political and ethical practices, and so the historical contingency surrounding the emergence of authoritative discourse or structure. Where they faltered, however, was in stipulating how such exemplars could be elevated beyond singular example to become culturally significant. In turning to dyadic relationships, a third literature (oriented to subjectivity) raised these questions of internalization and self-cultivation by examining formative relationships between Self and Other. In doing so, however, this

[26] Such is the assessment of one of the critical reviewers for *Nomos: Authority Revisited*, who found the claims about ambiguity and indeterminacy provocative but ultimately unsatisfying in suggesting new directions in research. James T. Kloppenberg, "Review: Nomos 29: Authority Revisited," *Ethics* 99.1 (October 1988): 163–4.

literature presumed a strong congruence between psychological and cultural order. Once again, self- and political governance collapsed into the iterative reproduction of power. My own turn to relationships to authority, then, seeks to pry apart self- and political governance so as to open up an "in-between space" in which claims to trust and truth-telling can be examined and exercised.[27] The final literature examined, then, considers the qualities of such a space or scene of address and the speech that it sustains.

## Authorship, Authority, and Rule

*What is authority?* "Whenever philosophy even glances at this question nowadays," writes Charles Hendel (contributor of the first essay in *Nomos I*), "it seems to have eyes only for freedom and ignores authority."[28] The same might be said about authority today, albeit for different reasons. Hendel intends the claim as a caution against those who might "take liberties" – and presumably disrupt political order – even as he acknowledges that political authority is now "indeterminate."[29] A generation after Hendel, authority has come to connote the very opposite of agentic political activity, much less an activity associated with everyday persons rather than leaders or governments. It is a concept more readily associated with political rule than with agency or political contest. Much like the concept of "rule," authority often is associated with its ability to "stand for the public claim,"[30] and further carries with it an association to legitimacy. Who, though, authors this public claim and by what process does it become authoritative? Although democratic authority is often taken to result from popular activity, whether that activity is ever more than the endorsement of authorization remains unexamined. Two dilemmas result. The first is the inability to think about governance on terms other than subordination. As a result, and second, it becomes impossible

[27] The language of "in-between space" is common to Arendt, Freud, and Foucault. If Freud and Foucault use it to describe the experiential space opened up by psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships, then Arendt gives this space political salience. She calls attention to "the odd in-between period which sometimes inserts itself into historical time when not only the later historians but the actors and witnesses, the living themselves, become aware of an interval in time which is altogether determined by things that are no longer and by things that are not yet. In history, these intervals have shown more than once that they may contain the moment of truth." In "Preface," p. 9.

[28] Charles Hendel, "An Exploration of the Nature of Authority," p. 7.

[29] Hendel, "An Exploration of the Nature of Authority," p. 26.

[30] Hendel, "An Exploration of the Nature of Authority," p. 9.

to think of authority as anything other than the opposite of freedom. Both would seem to leave intact the fantasy of liberation *from* authority, and so the presumption that popular experience of authority can never be more than obedience or rote authorization.

Authority has not always been understood on such terms. Where contemporary liberalism has come to consider "authority" almost entirely in terms of the rule that binds citizens and government,[31] the classical liberals of the early modern period had a broader view. Locke, Rousseau, and Kant each drew on formative, personal relationships of authority to prepare citizens to occupy common public spaces organized through words and deeds.[32] The education premised on personal relationships to authority – to parents, teachers, soul directors, and so forth – was seen to offer an experience of authority that prepared individuals to exercise their liberty as citizens. Such a claim is less stodgy than it might initially sound. It turns on viewing liberty and authority as entangled in paradox – and that entanglement as one to be continuously and actively negotiated rather than one to be stabilized onto the dichotomous terms of hierarchy. For the early moderns, the activity that would engage this paradox was that of education. Extended over time, education (sometimes framed on the terms of maturity) engaged the terms of the paradox and sought to rationalize the transition of dependent children into independent citizens, so to ensure growth and continuity across political generations. In his oft-overlooked *Some Thoughts on Education,* Locke agonizes about the temptations to "counterfeit Carriage, and dissembled Out-side, put on by Fear, only to avoid the present Anger of a Father who perhaps may

[31] For an account and critique of this treatment of rule, see Patchen Markell, "The Rule of the People: Arendt, Archê, and Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 100.1 (February 2006): 1–14.

[32] Locke does so in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James Axtell (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968) as well as the *Second Treatise* chapters "Of Paternal Power" and "Of the Beginning of Political Societies" in which he offers a competing historical account of political origins to address questions of political socialization insufficiently addressed in his state of nature account. Rousseau writes about education most notoriously in *Émile*. And Kant treats such relationships in "What is Enlightenment?" as well as in *Über Pädagogik* [Lecture-notes on Pedagogy], trans. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1904 [1803]). While Hobbes is the least inclined to theorize political authority in terms of personal experience – if anything, he writes to shut down personal experience as a guideline for judgment – even he appeals generically to those principal-agent relationships in which individuals, as "authors of their actions," can delegate this agency to others. Thomas Hobbes, Chapter 16 "Of Persons, Authors, and Things Personated," in *Leviathan* (1668).

dis-inherit him."[33] Locke ties such moral education to political socialization; tightly linking self- and political governance, he argues that "If any body should ask me, When my Son is *of Age to be free*? I shall answer, Just when his Monarch is of Age to govern."[34] The personal authority figured here as the readiness for consent finds its counterpart in government's own readiness to assume political authority. Kant, in *What is Enlightenment?* and also in *Über Pädagogik*, likewise worries "How can subjection to lawful constraint be combined with the ability to make use of one's freedom?"[35] Kant goes on to name pedagogy and politics as the

[33] See Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James Axtell (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), §42. Although little cited, Locke was deeply invested in *Some Thoughts* – he revised it five times, right up until his death – and the treatise circulated widely in England and France. Repeatedly, Locke cites Seneca's *Epistles*, in which Seneca outlines a set of "practices of the self" designed to teach self-governance. Yet Locke overlooks the fact that Seneca writes for those who are child-*like* in their dependencies, and not for actual children; eager to assure generational stability, Locke displaces Seneca's training in independence to the preparation for the single moment of consent. Considering it less a "second education," Locke urges the education to a "second nature" that will all but replace the first: "Every Man must some Time or other be trusted to himself, and his own Conduct; and he that is a good, a vertuous and able Man, must be made so within. And therefore, what he is to receive from Education, what is to sway and influence his Life, must be something put into him betimes; Habits woven into the very Principles of his Nature; and not a counterfeit Carriage, and dissembled Out-side, put on by Fear, only to avoid the present Anger of a Father who perhaps may dis-inherit him," (§42). Failure to instill such habits will result in adult children – citizens – ill-attuned to the tasks of citizenship and who, "when grown up, weary of you; secretly to say within themselves, *When will you Die, Father?*" (§40).

[34] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §62. Earlier, Locke has already ruled out children, madmen, and the mentally disabled from participation in political governance for their inability to self-govern. Locke uses the metaphor of "leading strings," akin to Kant some seventy-five years later, to capture the mix of book learning and practical learning that bring political steadiness. See "Letter to the countess of Peterborough," in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James Axtell (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

[35] See Kant's *Über Pädagogik* [Lecture-notes on Pedagogy], trans. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1904 [1803]), §29. Kant delivers four semesters of lectures on pedagogy during the periods 1776–77 and 1786–87; they are published in 1803 before his death in 1804. These lectures open with the claim that "Man is thus babe, pupil, and scholar" (§1). When later chided in a letter from Frederick William II for "distorting and disparaging" various religious teachings and authorities, Kant's response is to distinguish his role as an "educator of the people" from that of a "teacher of youth." The implications of serving as "educator of the people" are reprised in *The Conflict of the Faculties,* found in *Kant's Political Writings,* ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1798], pp. 186–9. Resistance is central to both educations. Only through an education based on resistance to the will can princes judiciously exercise their liberty and watch over the liberty of their subjects (*Über Pädagogik*, §5, §17).

"impossible professions"[36] for their inability to resolve permanently the paradox binding liberty and authority. Authoritative relationships, then, are profoundly marked by unease and anxiety over the entanglements of liberty and authority, and the effects of these inductions into politics on would-be citizens.

In seeking to institutionalize the paradox binding liberty and authority, contemporary liberalism inadvertently stifled its generative qualities and so began to stabilize "authority" as the experience of command and obedience. With the advent of mass politics, more pressure became placed on education as preparation for a more meaningful consent. The barbed personal encounters that vivified this paradox become re-written on the terms of a formalized civic education. I would argue that liberal and communitarian models for politics now variously seek to neutralize political resistance either by instilling shared civic virtues[37] or by reinforcing consent to existing institutions.[38] Education becomes a means to secure the political survival of the state via strengthened consent. While some theorists advocate an education that promotes critique,[39] this aim philosophically contradicts education's utility in securing consent.[40] Critical theorists (including Foucault) have inverted the terms of this paradox to argue the opposite point: that these interactions secure not liberty but obedience. Seizing on the "immediate social entourage"[41] whose authority broaches politics and culture – those doctors, legal experts, social workers – critical

[36] *Über Pädagogik* [Lecture-notes on Pedagogy], trans. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1904 [1803]), §12. Kant's remarks in the *Anthropology* take his own warning to heart, and present a picture of a self-governance that is ongoing; the use of one's reason brings skill by age twenty, prudence by age forty, and wisdom at age sixty. Education to self-governance extends beyond the years of instruction.

[37] Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[38] Harry Brighouse, "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy," *Ethics* 108 (July 1998): 719–45; John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

[39] Eamonn Callan, *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). See also the debate between Callan and Brighouse on "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy" in *Ethics* 108 (July 1998), 719–45.

[40] Such theories are unable to consider students' suspicion of political (and potentially educational) authorities even as they cite political apathy, disengagement, and disgust as reasons to increase civic education efforts. William Galston, "Political Knowledge, Political Education, and Civic Engagement," in *Annual Review of Political Science* (vol. 4, 2001), pp. 217–34.

[41] Foucault, "Two Lectures," p. 101. The translation in *Society Must Be Defended* is more literal: "immediate entourage" (*l'entourage immédiat*), p. 32 [p. 26, French edition].

theories have critiqued these cultural intermediaries for tightly binding power and knowledge into a relationship of discipline and docility. By their readings, the practices associated with that relationship to authority create an illusive experience of liberty that only deepens the force of rule. By defining good citizens as those who ultimately support a specific politics, both sets of theories risk collapsing the political and ethical aims of education.[42] The resulting "politicized education" becomes a means to encourage a particular kind of citizen and a particular kind of political engagement.[43] Despite the initial headiness of these critiques, each of these accounts ends in the experience of impasse and leaves authority (as a concept and practice) unavailable to serious interrogation.

Political authority becomes static and slides toward mere rule when the paradox binding liberty and authority is abandoned and politics becomes equated with order. In overlooking the earlier role of personal relationships, contemporary thinkers miss their potential to revitalize the imbrication of liberty and authority and to re-negotiate the terms of authorship. The language of "authorship" becomes appealing for its ability to sidestep these impasses, to return to the initial paradox binding liberty and authority, and to hold this paradox central to democratic political practices. By turning to "authority," then, I seek neither to resolve the paradox nor to revalorize it, but to open new conceptual space. I suggest that the practices of freedom most often associated with contemporary politics also imply practices of authorship. If, to borrow Foucault's apposite phrase, contemporary politics seeks "not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles,"[44] then one dimension of any response must be to alter the terms of authority: to ask, under what

[42] For an account of political science's own disciplinary failure in this regard, see Ira Katznelson's "The Subtle Politics of Developing Emergency: Political Science as Liberal Guardianship." Katznelson argues that political scientists, worried by the mass politics associated with fascism and totalitarianism in the post–World War Two period, developed theoretical blindspots around issues of class and race. Katznelson argues that their commitments to stability led them to over-value elite authority and norms of consensus. The result was theories that "treated disruption and protest as standing outside the normal process of legitimate political participation," in *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*, eds. Noam Chomsky, Laura Nader, Howard Zinn, and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: The New Press, 1998), pp. 233–58.

[43] I borrow this distinction from Peter Euben. See Peter Euben, *Corrupting Youth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[44] Foucault, "What is Critique?" in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 384.

conditions do individuals author their actions, constrained by which hierarchies, and interpreted in reference to which ideals?

Under certain conditions, relationships to authority might evoke the hum of human vibrancy as well as the stabilizing frameworks that would contain and direct this potency. Arendt suggests as much when she claims that authority "implies an obedience in which men retain their freedom."[45] She, too, goes on to locate its experiences with the *auctoritas maiorum*, now synonymous with authoritative models, that at once draw on the past even as their activity of augmentation (a word that shares with "authority" the root *augere*) is oriented toward the future.[46] The counsel offered in the context of these relations "need[s] neither the *form* of command nor external coercion to make itself heard."[47] Authority becomes manifest as these conventions draw lines between past and future and so affirm the listening audience as a more enduring community. These examples cannot be cleanly distinguished from those inflected by power, violence, or coercion. Indeed, the force of *On Violence* is to argue "[p]ower and violence, though they are distinct phenomena, usually appear together,"[48] and to direct attention away from the classification of political phenomena and toward "the whole matrix of oppositions that structures contemporary democratic theory [as] itself an artifact of the ongoing dominance… [of efforts] to rationalize hierarchical social and political forms."[49] Patchen Markell, among others, thus argues that such a gloss fundamentally re-orders democratic politics to find in political activity both the stability associated with rule (of the people, as in popular sovereignty) and the unpredictability of democratic contest (also of the people, now faulted for the disorder of popular insurgency).

The challenge posed by attending to "authority," then, is the challenge of analyzing its *interpretive* dimensions rather than its phenomenal presence or absence. In his own work on rule, Markell finds in Arendt's attention to action and beginnings a call to the "practical attunement"[50] that could discern in politics both overlooked regularities and burgeoning interruptions. In determining the political potency of either, individuals must exercise the interpretive authority that would read them against political narratives. Rule and beginnings are part and parcel of the same

[45] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 106.
[46] Arendt, "What is Authority," pp. 120–4ff.
[47] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 123. Emphasis added.
[48] Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 52.
[49] Markell, "The Rule of the People," p. 2.
[50] Markell, "The Rule of the People," p. 7.

response. Neither Markell nor Arendt offer specifics as to how such practical attunement is to be cultivated and practiced[51] – a challenge that, once again, mass politics would seem to render acute. My own turn to authorship and authority, then, specifies a key element of the conditions for such responsiveness – an educative relationship to personal authority that teaches persons to navigate the paradox of liberty and authority and its dangerous proximity to hierarchy. Such relationships offer an alternative to subordination and very bluntly suggest that for these alternatives to be politically meaningful they must cultivate individuals to the authorial practices that would make popular insurgency or popular rule more than euphemism.

The turn to relations and relational practices to think through authorship and authority further seeks to push beyond the individualism endemic to Arendt's account of politics. For all that Arendt situates politics in a "web of human relationships," this web all too easily becomes either undifferentiated – one "with many actors and speakers and yet without any tangible authors"[52] – or enthralled by the disclosures of oddly singular agents. Concerned as Arendt is to enlarge and energize the role of spectating audience – and correspondingly to minimize the singularity of would-be heroes – her sense of authorial presence becomes strangely displaced. At times, authorship appears to emerge from the framing of political activity; controlled by no single actor, authorship becomes something that emerges from the hubbub of an otherwise passive collective audience. Such a claim curiously undercuts her earlier attention to the very personal "dependence of the beginner and leader upon others for help and the dependence of his followers upon him for an occasion to act themselves."[53] These dependencies would seem to lend greater texture to the web of relationships and to disarticulate an otherwise collective polity. The breakdown of these interdependencies further serves as the first step in transforming this relationship "into the *Herrschaft* exercised by one who already knows what is to be done… over one who obeys."[54] (These

[51] To be clear, Markell notes that "Some of the most important work of democratic politics thus consists in the interpretation of particular events; that is, in the re-presentation of happenings that, although they may or may not be widely known as matters of fact, are not (as widely experienced as practically significant" (13). My turn to the psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships, the practical attunement they engage, and then the political practices of "frame-breaking" outlined in Chapter Seven could be read as one possible critical interpretation of Markell's claim.

[52] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 184.

[53] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 189.

[54] Markell, "The Rule of the People," p. 11.

dependences would also seem to give a more central place to relations of power and asymmetry, a point to which I will return later.) Other times, in Arendt's discussion of story-telling and history, authorship would seem to be the province of a participant-observer – someone present and part of the actuality-at-hand and yet who tells the story retrospectively from some unnamed vantage point. Meaning coheres primarily through the story-telling found in "the backward glance of the historian."[55] In this instance, authorship seems to be if not outside of community then at least temporally disjointed from its activities. For all that Arendt offers a reconsideration of agency and action in politics, the activity of authorship remains curiously displaced in a way that attenuates its political effect.

Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships account for and engage these two displacements of authorship. If the new relationships urged by Arendt are to be "like a second birth,"[56] then Freud and Foucault deepen the form and content of these relationships by taking this metaphoric second birth seriously. The psychoanalytic *Nacherziehung* or "second-education," for example, complicates Arendt's insistence that beginnings are new attunements to old patterns as much as they can be disruptions. As I will argue later, the psychoanalytic relationship draws on an interdependency that solidifies into a more deeply collaborative relationship, one that resists the distinction between the one who authors and the one who acts until the last possible moment. The work of psychoanalysis directs our attention to that political work that may be an undoing as much as it is a beginning anew. It, like *parrhesia*, offers an experience of counsel that is reducible neither to command nor external coercion, and so makes of its asymmetries something other than subordination. By being *like* a second birth (rather than a complete experience of political conversion or transfiguration), both relationships hold onto the tensions and discontinuities between past and present.[57] They acknowledge that those same conditions that actualize or enable the emergence of self might well contribute to the disablement of political potential; such a claim is the very grist for the interpretive authority each cultivates. These relationships, with the experience of childhood past that clings yet about

[55] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 192.

[56] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 177 (cited in Markell, "Rule of the People," p. 7).

[57] The turn in these relationships to the past would seem to make them function more like the models of the *auctoritas maiorum* that Arendt locates in the Roman experience than the model of rule-as-education that she associates with the Greeks. Absent this attention to transmission, such models, for Arendt, risk serving "primarily to obscure real or coveted claims to rule," (p. 119ff). See "What is Authority?"

them, evoke the haunting of prior raptures and subjections that are the conditions for the emergence of individual subjects even as these past experiences continue to crowd about politics in the present. In a manner that evokes Judith Butler more than Arendt, these relationships serve as the hinge between personal ethics and normative order that might prise each apart from the other. The turn to authorship and authority, then, becomes an effort to recover the entanglements of liberty and authority rooted in personal relationships; to analyze the interpretive practices these embody and teach; and locate in them a resource for greater individual agency in politics.

## From Power to Authority: Mapping a Conceptual Transition

Over the last thirty-five years, political scientists have turned to "power" as the proper conceptual lens by which to make sense of political relations of hierarchy.[58] Under what conditions, then, might relationships of authority challenge these hierarchies without themselves inflicting harm? In recognition of the diversity in relations of hierarchy, recent work has pluralized the concept to emphasize diversity in modes of power as exercised in the modern world.[59] Such a disciplinary trend reflects the intuition that claims to authority often invoke the thin veil of legitimacy in order to cloak the more uncomplicated activities of rule or outright domination, and that political science ought to analyze the mechanisms that support such claims while remaining silent about their normative cast. The vocabulary of power has come to feel more honest and straightforward – a neat way to step around disputes about the legitimacy or authority of a person, policy, or political order. Following Arendt's essay, political theorists have been skeptical that one could speak meaningfully about authority absent reference to a cultural system of meaning – such as religion or tradition – that could subtly distinguish legitimate from illegitimate claims. Subsequent work sought to separate authority from power,[60]

[58] See Stephen Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1986 [1974]); Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[59] For example, the work on post-colonialism associated with political theory and comparative politics has worked to differentiate colonialist from non-colonialist relations of power, and those working on intersectionality have examined how the power dynamics of race, gender, sexuality and class alternately compound and strain against one another.

[60] Richard Flathman, *Authority and the Authoritative: The Practice of Political Authority* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980); Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

from violence,[61] or the nature of the obligations it can impose.[62] Following publication of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, intellectual attention has instead concentrated on relations of power, their ability to produce and reproduce individuals in alignment with cultural norms, and their diffusion throughout modern society.

In such a context, personal relationships to power have prompted especially charges of abuse and paternalism. From early modern concerns about the relationship between aristocratic "guardians" and "politically immature" citizens, to American Progressive era philanthropy aimed at the "tutelage" of delinquent populations, to the technocratic expertise invoked in contemporary welfare-to-workfare reforms, modern politics has used power relationships to compel adjustment to political norms. Earlier analyses of power have thus sought to excavate those institutions and relations of power that contour and constrain the vulnerable. Among contemporary theorists, these efforts have been multiple. One set – drawing on scholars James Nolan, Andrew Polsky, and James Chriss – has read Foucault against Freud, in order to develop historical and sociological analyses of the "therapeutic state." Citing the consolidation of state institutions first during the Progressive Era and then again in the post-war years, they elaborate a thesis first articulated by Kant: that the struggle between religion, medicine, law and politics to define individuals has incrementally been called in favor of the state.[63] Later analyses of the specifically liberal state, exemplified by Wendy Brown's *States of Injury,* critiqued the determining effect of state and cultural forces on identity.[64] Still others have found in these relationships examples of a

[61] Hannah Arendt, "What is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books 1993 [1970]); W. Carey McWilliams, "On Violence and Legitimacy," *The Yale Law Journal*, March 1970, 79(4): 623–646.

[62] William Connolly, "Modern Authority and Ambiguity," in *Authority Revisited, Nomos XXIX* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1987); ed. Carl Friedrich, "Authority," in *Authority, Nomos I*, pp. 28–48.

[63] See James Chriss, *Counseling and the Therapeutic State* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc.); James Nolan, *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Andrew Polsky, *The Rise of the Therapeutic State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[64] Illustrative examples include Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); William Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988) and *Identity/Difference,* expanded edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); eds. Colin Gordon and Graham Burchell, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Jacqueline Stevens, *States without Nations: Citizenship for Mortals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Stephen White, *Political Theory and Post-Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

neo-Kantian effort to bridge noumenal and phenomenal worlds by bringing ethics and politics to bear on one another, rather than leaving them forever divided by that crooked timber of humanity.[65] Drawing as much on Nietzsche and Foucault as on Marx and Weber, such analyses have left us with the image of "wounded attachments" by which individuals are personally and psychologically invested in the very norms, institutions, and discourses that harm them. The commitment to the language of "power" reflects a desire to cut through the rhetorical, the ideological, and the normatively disingenuous.

Part of the difficulty in theorizing authority, then, lies in the way that it strains against democratic relations. Authority implies an inequality or asymmetry in relationship. To speak with authority is not to speak from one's innate capacity as a *zoon politikon* but instead from some other claim to positional advantage.[66] It is also to imply that some criterion other than persuasion or reasonability may be invoked to influence how and in what way the other person may respond. Authority seeks to compel – and leaves open the terms of what might incite conviction. The indeterminacy of these terms, and their historical tendency to be settled with an appeal to religious or traditional hierarchies, understandably contributes to the suspicion that claims to authority mask claims of power. Clarity and transparency of those criteria that might distinguish more from less legitimate authorities would seem necessary in order to prevent these distinctions from being used by the strong to manipulate the weak. If nothing else, the imbrication of power and authority makes their conceptual separation appear nearly impossible.

Why do power and authority (and the related concepts, coercion and violence) seem to stubbornly resist efforts at definitional capture, even when framed as ideal-types? In part this difficulty results from authority's own complex nature. Authority ought neither be reducible to coercion (this quality is what distinguishes authority from power or outright violence), nor can it be understood on the same terms as persuasion. As Arendt notes, persuasion rests on a presumption of equality between participants; to persuade, I need to recognize you as worthy

[65] Those who might loosely be defined as neo-Kantian include David Owen, *Maturity and Modernity: Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the Ambivalence of Reason* (London: Routledge, 1994); Tracy B. Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, expanded Illini Books edition (University of Illinois Press, 2000); Linda Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[66] For the distinction between being "in authority" or "an authority," see William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2003 [1974]).

or deserving of persuasion rather than simply dependent on my will. While authority, like persuasion, might well be reciprocal – you must believe my claim to authority – this reciprocity occurs despite a certain inequality of position. Asymmetries of relationship complicate efforts to distinguish authority from power. In an effort to move away from categorical ideal types, William Connolly writes that authority might be best characterized as "a coordinate, of those relationships in which A exercises power over B."[67]

Thinking about authority as a coordinate of relations of power and as a particular relationship of asymmetry inadvertently crystallizes the difficulties of its analysis. In its historical dimensions, authority is very much tied to the legitimation of political order as it transitions toward new terms, new vocabularies, and new institutions. It occupies a very peculiar position in that gap between past and future, insofar as it looks to maintain one of the lineages to the past while signaling which path forward might be chosen with greater confidence. In the absence of religion, tradition, or even the grand narratives of foundationalism, this emphatically historical positioning is hard to ground with any permanence. In its historical dimension, authority is very much a coordinate in that its exercise is most crucial as the dusk of one historical moment becomes the dawn of another. Authority always finds itself in the process of being constituted, even as it must always be retrospective in defining itself with or against the legitimacy of what came before. It further coordinates multiple overlapping relations that span institutions, their hierarchies, and their respective sources of legitimacy. The difficulties in providing a simple, elegant definition for authority encountered earlier, then, seem symptomatic of the concept's inadequacy for being stabilized in ahistorical, ideal-typical categories.[68] If, analytically, authority relies on the presumption of legitimacy,

[67] William Connolly, *Terms of Political Discourse* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2003 [1974]), p. 108.

[68] The initial volume of *Nomos* calls attention to a division between the essays in the volume, one that will prove significant for my argument – namely, that political thinkers treat authority on either "the level of political science, where it is a term with an assigned and precise meaning within the general schematism" or "on the plane of political philosophy, with its concern with evaluations, popular and critical" (a distinction presented by contributor George Catlin). An early reviewer of the volume sniffs that while certain essays treat authority "as a social science concept… it is not evident from reading them that there is… much general agreement on usage" ("Review," p. 220). The reviewer goes on to speculate that "there are still other contributors who would probably deny the legitimacy of the distinction drawn by Catlin," and that "the collection lacks any real unifying center." Admittedly, such comments could be read many ways. They mark, however, the division between conceiving authority on epistemological or political

then political authority would appear to disinherit any kind of political contest over its terms from the beginning.

Contemporary reflections on power, authority, and the vulnerability of political dependents have thus stalled before two impossibilities. Some accounts, often rooted in an analytic philosophy preoccupied with logical coherence, have sought to establish authority's presence or absence categorically and *ex ante*; whereas other accounts, motivated by political concerns for the vulnerable, have sought to identify a self-cultivation that could be unambiguously undertaken without harm or hierarchy. The first set of accounts – which includes thinkers as various as William Connolly, Raymond Geuss, and Richard Flathman – analyzes "authority" on primarily conceptual and epistemological terms.[69] Despite the sensitivity of these thinkers to the empirical unruliness of relations of authority, and against their stated recognition that concepts find expression in historically specific contexts, these accounts finish by divorcing epistemological and political practice. Building on hypothetical examples, they move between general analytic dimensions of authority – differences between being *an* authority or *in* authority, for example – and particular examples. The unintended effect is to replicate the divide between epistemology and politics and to suggest that the terms for evaluating relations of power and authority might be settled in advance. That these examples often hypothesize interactions between 'persons A and B' – a stylistic move that individualizes and decontextualizes political relationships – occludes the interaction between individual and collective practices of power or authority. They offer no sense of what enables individual relationships to bear on collective practices.[70] While the conceptual insight gained from these accounts is substantial, the cost is a missed opportunity to explore

terms; that this division carries with it different criteria of evidence; and that efforts at ethical evaluation of any of these claims will be difficult as a result. Carl Friedrich concludes his essay with the claim "there can be no total authority, because there does not exist any absolute truth or total reason" (p. 47). Byrum Carter, "Review," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 3.2 (May 1959): 220–2; Carl Friedrich, "Authority, Reason, and Discretion," *Nomos I: Authority* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[69] See William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2003 [1974]); Richard Flathman, *Authority and the Authoritative: The Practice of Political Authority* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980); Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[70] Peter Blau notes this difficulty in his reflections on Weber's definition of authority but approaches the problem from the opposite direction; he speculates that authority must be howsoever legitimated at the level of collective practice before it can be said to govern "pair relationships." See "Critical Remarks on Weber's Theory of Authority," *The American Political Science Review*, June 1963, 57.2: 305–316.

the dynamics that bind particular context and generic concept or that bind individual and political practice. As a result, the unwitting effect is to generate a set of conceptual distinctions – not unlike those of ideal typologies – that do not enable their practitioners to reflect on the cultural boundedness of these terms. A turn away from purely epistemological approaches to authority, then, is the ineluctable condition of the loss of external doctrine.

Scholars in the second group, predominantly concerned that relations to authority have a disproportionate effect on the vulnerable, have settled for urging the necessity of critique and political resistance while demurring on how critique might be acquired or articulated. Working against this tendency, theorists in this second group – again an unlikely grouping that includes Hannah Arendt, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, and Gayatri Spivak among others – have sought both to problematize the distinction between (illegitimate) power and (legitimate) authority, and to analyze the invisible effects of power and coercion. Beyond this diagnostic moment, these theorists have investigated the political dynamics and harms occasioned by these variant relations of hierarchy. Across interpretive approaches these theorists share a concern that vulnerability has come to be mapped entirely onto one side of the authoritative relationship and that this political dependency has been naturalized. Within this second group, the critical response has been to ask how subjects might occupy a position orthogonal to the usual vertical lines of hierarchy so as to parry efforts to politically categorize; or to re-define the public space of the margins as a site of resistance; or to animate political bodies defined in terms of character and capacity.

While these scholars admirably disaggregate the workings of modern power, they offer less guidance for those citizens anxious to disown the discourses of mastery that enmesh them. Although these accounts excel at identifying the determining effects of relations of power, they tend to presume subjects defined uniformly through psychologies of harm and violence.[71] Outstanding is the question of whether these asymmetrical relations – but especially those that govern self-cultivation – could ever be said to operate without harm and so be identified as authoritative. The result was an analytically and politically powerful series of interventions that framed the politics of identity in terms of its constant iteration and coding of bodies through broader political, economic, and cultural structures. As

[71] See Judith Butler, *Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) and *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge 1999 [1990]).

bodies and selves become divorced from one another, this two-ness became crippling; an effect of power, such two-ness appeared to diminish political action. Politically, the fantasy became either one of a relation to hierarchy pure of coercion, or of a resistance that somehow escaped beyond hierarchy by critiquing its terms. Theorists overlook the possibility for authoritative relationships to be ones of mutual vulnerability and dependency, where the framework is less that of creation *de novo* than the messy, collaborative political work of exchange, constant negotiations, revisions.

Despite their very substantial differences, both groupings of contemporary scholars approach asymmetries as an experience of obedience and command – and thus they inadvertently collude in the contemporary longing for that liberation most readily countered to power. Authority risks becoming the *Traum des Gefangenen* (*The Prisoner's Dream*) signaled in the frontispiece of this book. The fixation on authority as antithetical to liberty enervates surrounding ethical and political practices. By avoiding the discretionary work needed to distinguish power and authority, other practices themselves discretionary (but especially practices of trust and truth-telling) weaken.

Mindful of these impossibilities, how might we recover a more democratic vocabulary or discourse regarding authority? Intuitively, the experience of authority should be open to the workings of everyday language and moral experience. After all, our first experiences with authority are deeply personal: as children, we become acquainted with the authorities that are parents, bossy older sisters, teachers, doctors, and religious leaders. We interact with such figures on a regular basis and as chary children learn quickly to distinguish the efforts of, say, schoolteachers to exercise authority from the more dubious essays of those older sisters. As any seasoned kindergarten teacher knows, authority draws from more than just an advantage in height or institutional prerogative to school twenty squirming children; and as any child knows, the authority exercised by different teachers, parents, and baby-sitters tolerates different levels of petulance depending on person and context. If we have such a functional understanding of authority in our personal relationships, and from such a young age, then what prevents us from confidently moving the term onto political or epistemological terrain? The challenge has to be something other than one of scale or abstraction. After all, the more familiar concept of power achieves its effects through the micro-extension of macro political structures. Mitigating or countering its effects thus suggests the need to engage both micro and macro levels of politics, and to understand authority on similar structural terms. Foucault's own late lectures

on governmentality hazarded this need to understand how the practices and language of conducts and counter-conducts derived as much from personal as from political life. If the lingering insight from earlier work is that power's effects are both culturally diffuse and empowered by state institutions, then the challenge would be to analyze those relationships that bear on self- and political governance, and to consider the conditions under which these relationships might counter or disrupt the conducts encouraged by power. The challenge would be to rethink the terms of hierarchy so as to distinguish relations of asymmetry from those of harm.

## Beyond Suffering: The Relationship to Self and to Others

In light of the very real harms and inequalities of contemporary politics – exemplified by the race riots in Villeneuve de Grenoble, in Saint-Denis, and in Avignon in 2010; the increasing penalization of non-whites not just in the United States but also in France and other countries; an ever-present underclass of the poor – any turn to projects of self-fashioning as an approach to the crisis of authority may seem dilettantish and indulgent. Critics have criticized one approach to such projects – that of the "arts of living" associated with contemporary thinkers ranging from Richard Rorty to Alexander Nehamas to Pierre Hadot[72] – as lacking any substantive goals or principles by which to orient its formal methods; of advocating an embrace of "charisma that strains against reason"[73]; and of devolving into an indulgent self-referentialism. Across all of these critiques, the general charge is one of turning matters of power, domination, and justice into idiosyncrasies of taste. These arts are understood relatively straightforwardly in terms of life projects essayed, without pushing unduly on who participates, on what terms, and by which criteria. The place for political, economic, and cultural structures in mediating these "practices of the self" dissipates.

Change from one cultural order to another must locate and invest new figures with the symbolic authority to sustain not just a new critical method but a different social world comprised of those "constant

[72] See Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault,* trans. Arnold Davidson (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1995).

[73] See Martha Nussbaum, "The Cult of the Personality: The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault, by Alexander Nehamas," *New Republic*, Jan. 4 and 11, 1999: 32–37.

practices and exercises" that build an "elementary living-together."[74] Breaking the cyclical association of psychological *ressentiment* and sense-making frameworks associated with science and liberal democracy requires both cultural figures and institutions capable of elaborating broadly available practices. Even as those favoring "arts of living" argue for its relevance to contemporary living (and so, presumably, politics), they spend relatively little time examining the organization of personal example by collective structure.[75] While the specific model of "arts of living" may be inadequate, it reminds us that authority and self-cultivation are impeded by a broadly impersonal, rationalized modern politics that corrodes trust. We are left with the question of what model might differently cultivate the intimate relationships of trust necessary even in mass democracy, and how these relationships might more readily open onto politics. On these dimensions, psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships would seem to offer not just a new or better set of icons but a structural encounter designed to bring self-governance and political governance to bear on one another by drawing new links between personal and collective practice. If relations to others unavoidably offer the social conditions of existence, then the relationship to a psychoanalyst or *parrhesiastes* serves to crystallize these conditions onto a culturally symbolic dyad. These dyads become more than just chance relations between two strangers. These educative figures – as well as what Foucault calls their "evil twins," doctors and experts – resonate importantly across political and cultural community. More than just exemplars elevated above the crowd, these figures serve as nodal points between self- and political governance both because of the specificity of the practices they urge and because of the symbolic position they hold. These authoritative figures, along with the relations that bind them to others, suggest an opportunity to open up the ethical work of self-cultivation to a broader set of social and political conditions. No longer need individuals husband themselves by challenging themselves to somehow be otherwise – a challenge that misunderstands ethical education as a kind of auto-didacticism.

[74] These terms reprise those in Arendt's essay, "What is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future*, pp. 14, 141.

[75] Joseph Tanke provides an interesting reading against modernism and its quarrels with representation in *Foucault's Philosophy of Art: A Genealogy of Modernity* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009). Numerous others read Foucault as offering a transgressive aesthetics. Jon Simons provides a straightforward overview of the relevant Foucauldian texts and their critics in *Foucault and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

These dyadic relationships resonate deeply with Judith Butler's recent work in *Giving an Account of Oneself*.[76] Drawing on the late Foucault and the Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Laplanche, Butler elaborates an ethical responsiveness in terms of those "scenes of address" in which exposure to another prompts us to an account-giving. Perhaps less starkly than in Butler's earlier work – one thinks here of *Gender Trouble* and to a lesser extent *Psychic Life of Power* – the first contact we have with another is unavoidably one of exposure and potential harm; across these works, Butler leans heavily on the language of *ressentiment*, injury, and violence to generate the imperative for ethical responsiveness. Nietzsche's subjectivized *ressentiment* here becomes more deeply tied to the social conditions of existence. Exposure is the simultaneous self-expression and social siting of vulnerability. Muteness is less a failing to seek one's own form of self-expression than a muteness in the face of traumas inflicted by social and political structures themselves immutable. Where a more aesthetic approach to injury would seek to move between singularity and resonance, from Butler's perspective the conventions surrounding taste also establish norms and "a domain of unfreedom and substitutability within which our 'singular' stories are told."[77] Scenes of address seek to disrupt the settledness of these domains by confronting the iterations of social conventions, those that threaten to swamp singularity, with the brute facticity of exposure. Butler leans heavily on exposure's very facticity to generate the ethical and social responses that will come to be constitutive of individuals.

Ethical responsibility thus becomes a human imperative, and one framed on social terms, but at the cost of a high burden of obligation, constant guilt, and the definition of individuals in terms of an injury whose scar remains forever with them. The insistence on such scars has important philosophic roots. Indebted to Nietzsche and Hegel both, Butler qualifies the naïve progressivism common to other late modern accounts of politics and ethics by insisting on mnemonic traces that both mark subjects and distort ethical relations such as obligation and promising by inflecting them with guilt and status. The cost is tremendous. It is an inability to conceive a human agency that might be generative even in the face of failure. Fear of failure – or that empowerment will be tempted toward command – results in its own paralysis. More troubling is the loss of transformative potential attached to failures that instead become irretrievable; any failed address becomes figured on the terms

[76] Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University, 2005).
[77] Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, p. 21.

of a negation that overwhelms any striving to be ethical. Those taking Butler as their starting point have a more sophisticated understanding of those regimes (be they regimes of law, race, gender, class, etc.) that mediate self and order. Yet their stipulated individuals are so thoroughly enmeshed in these regimes that they struggle to initiate or collectivize in their own name and on their own terms.

These challenges should push us to look for a set of relationships with roles and dynamics less rigid, and whose asymmetries do not readily map onto political hierarchies.[78] On these points, the educative model found equally in psychoanalysis as in *parrhesia* offers an appealing alternative. After all, educator and student remain bound to one another but through roles defined provisionally and at the interstices of ethic and political interactions. While culturally prominent, these figures seek to avoid being mapped onto permanent relations of political dependency. The result is a very different dynamic: even as these asymmetrical relations capture the dislocation of modern individuals, they are not beholden to it. Instead, these asymmetries arrange a context in which individuals must give an account of themselves on others' terms. Individuals narrate their own vulnerabilities in order to seize hold of and revise their terms. To be successful, such educators would need to avoid the problems of Nietzsche's ascetic priest and Kant's guardians: namely, that the legitimacy of their authority lies beyond both the comprehension of the vulnerable, or indefensibly beyond the relationship itself. These problems crystallize in the classic question of "who shall educate the educator?" Instead, authority would need to be immanent in the relationship itself. Rather than being personally invested in hierarchical position, both parties would need to be invested in the relationship and its outcome.

Where the intransigence of Nietzschean *ressentiment*, Freudian bad conscience, or Foucault's power-knowledge – an intransigence that results in individuals defined through injury – derives from the overlap of claims to ethics, politics, and knowledge, here psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* innovate. Both models disaggregate the relationship to oneself, to others,

[78] Other possibilities for such relationships might include Aristotelian relationships of friendship. To the extent that such relationships are rooted in an ethics that is practice-based rather than rule-bound, they are consonant with aspects of my problematic. However, they lack the asymmetries that are generative in my analysis of psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships; these asymmetries further preserve the challenges of hierarchy in a democratic setting. For similar reasons, Freud and Foucault specifically abjure relations of friendship as the grounds for their own theorizing. This is not to say that friendship relations have no contribution to democratic ethical culture; simply, the kind of ethical cultivation they offer is less suited to thinking through the effects of political asymmetries.

and to truth-telling. While these relationships often do overlap with one another, their coincidence is imperfect. It becomes possible to separate the terms on which a person narrates herself from those on which she is formed. Self-authorship becomes both an activity of self-expression and potentially contributory to the process of political authorization. Even with the disjunctures of these three relationships, it remains possible to preserve some sense of subjectivity. Preserving that sense of subjectivity would seem crucial as we experience our social and ethical world on these terms: our joys and pains seems profoundly to be *ours*.

The turn to relationships of authority, then, is more than a sociological response to the demands of modern rationalized order (although it is that). By disarticulating these relationships into the imperfectly coinciding relations to self, to others, and to truth-telling, one can pull ethics and politics apart so as to speak about each differently. This is not to say that ethics and politics are separate and distinct – far from it. Very deliberately, these relationships place ethics and politics in tension with one another; they render that tension productive; and so allow a new kind of speech-activity to emerge from these structural dynamics. These speech-activities enable a re-evaluation of the ethical and political norms that affect person and community both.

## Speech-Activities and Scenes of Address

One might alternately conceive authority in terms of authoritative speech – speech as authorized by legal protections or moral claims to speak truth to power. In the early modern period, the speech of consent was tightly associated to nascent mechanisms of accountability, obligation, and participation that cemented trust in government and political judgment. As political reforms increased enfranchisement in the nineteenth century, speech (within the context of liberal thought) became associated with the democratization of political access and the related concerns of mediocrity and conventionalism. In contemporary politics, speech is alternately associated with deliberation in the face of conflicting systems of value (as with Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib), or with a robust agonism in the face of consumerist quietism or normalization (as with William Connolly or Bonnie Honig).[79] Such speech generally

[79] For a crisp reading of this historical sweep, and the legacy for present debates on deliberation, see Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

presumes an audience available, if not always willing, to hear it. How might we engage a speech not yet authorized?

In each of these instances, certain assumptions are made about speech and the context for speech that are ill-suited to making sense of psychoanalysis or *parrhesia*. To varying extents, political theory tends to privilege the formal conditions that govern "free" speech (conditions of openness, transparency, publicity – or their absence) as well as the importance of speakers who make and defend claims free of moral or political constraint.[80] In the instance of *parrhesia*, for example, much is usually made either of its boldness or of its appeal to sincerity. Despite the apparent rareness of audacity and sincerity in public life – a rareness that should make *parrhesia* a perplexity rather than a panacea – the social and ethical practices that sustain this speech as recognizably "free" or "risky" or "sincere" are left unexplored, with the implication that the performance of these traits would be self-evident to any audience. Yet a speech connected to questions of authority (in the absence of external doctrine) would seem to need a better defense of such practices; of their historical emergence and transformation into political tradition; and of the knowledge common to the audience that would serve as a touchstone to bind listeners and facilitate judgment. These are the qualities that would enable personal relationships to bear on collective practices.

On these criteria, the genres of speech associated with psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* might offer a more compelling alternative than those grouped under the rubric of deliberation. Rather than relying on an already or implicitly legitimated public context, psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* offer something closer to a scene of address composed equally by author and audience. Scenes of address arise from the moment of arrest, they are an interpellation that swiftly pulls speaker and listener into relation with one another. In place of arresting speaker and receptive audience, a different dynamic emerges. It perhaps is closer to that evoked by literary theorist Gérard Genette in his classic *Narrative Discourse,* a

[80] Recently, *parrhesia* has received greater attention from political theorists and classicists both, and have framed its contributions to questions of critical or free speech in a variety of ways. For a reading of *parrhesia* attentive to its political potential, see Elizabeth Markovits, *The Politics of Sincerity: Plato, Frank Speech, and Democratic Judgment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); for an analysis of *parrhesia* against other modes of speech, see S. Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); to read *parrhesia* against the American free speech tradition, see Arlene Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

book that puzzles through the narrative structures that shape discourse in various ways and to varying effects. After some number of pages in which Genette analyzes the effects that a text produces on the reader, he concludes with an odd claim: that "the real author of [a] narrative is not only he who tells it, but also, and at times even more, he who hears it. And who is not necessarily the one it is addressed to: there are always people *off to the side*."[81] Genette's passage leaves open the question: what would it mean, for politics, to think about scenes of political address in terms of those people *off to the side*. And what would it mean to consider them as the so-called "real authors of a narrative"?

To return briefly to Arendt, her own various writings on speech and action offer a variegated landscape of speech. Itself culled from a public lecture, her essay "Introduction *into* Politics" points to an instability in terms of the audience of address in its initial reflections on prejudice, judgment, and ideology. In sorting out the distinctions between the speech of command, of chatter, of ideology, and of unrevised prejudice to which the legitimacy of times past still clings – each of which implies a different kind of audience – Arendt creates for her reader a scene of distraction. It is a scene populated by those directly interpellated and commanded by others; with the chatter of the everyday and the not-quite-political; with those who unblinkingly speak claims from another time and for another audience; and also populated by the anonymous audience of ideology, always presumed and never named. No wonder that, on Arendt's terms, judgment has become impossible due to our lack of trust in, or even fear of, other humans. Each of these voices implicitly presumes a structure for the political scene, and in so speaking and presuming, it hopes that others will collude in their projection of a political world. In so doing, each projection contains within it an utter disavowal that there might be other projections of political worlds that deserve some acknowledgement and engagement. Rather than tending to that in-between space of politics, Arendt laments that we have sought refuge in the behaviorism often associated with the social sciences that seeks to sift through this cacophony to find some underlying pattern. She writes that modes of behavior offer insight at the cost of "exclud[ing] man as an active agent, the author of demonstrable events in the world, and [so] demotes him to a creature who simply behaves differently in different situations."[82]

[81] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 262.

[82] Hannah Arendt, "Introduction into Politics" in *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007).

Here we are back again to a preoccupation with authors and authorship, this time tied to events in the world and not, as Genette would have it, to the people off to the side who author (perhaps even authorize) what they hear. To read this passage against Arendt's comments on Vichy and the French Resistance evoked earlier is to recognize something about the kind of public context necessary in order to grapple with the present crisis of authority. It is to recognize that part of the challenge in addressing the legitimacy of any putative authority is that of deliberately composing a scene of address rather than presuming some kind of already-existent public realm or sphere. When Foucault writes with Kant's sign that would "rememorate, commemorate, and prognosticate"[83] in mind, like Arendt he raises the question of how events and interpretations might be authorized. Freud and Foucault, differently from Arendt, suggest that such authorization must further acknowledge those who find themselves "off to one side" – that is, those who hear but are not directly addressed. If the authorization is broadened to include these other interlocutors, it suggests that authorization does not proceed entirely through deliberation of first principles, but that its ethical force comes at least partly through a kind of ethical indirection. Those who witness have the opportunity to evaluate a different range of ethical virtues – courage, honesty, trustworthiness – whose force derives from expression, not from argumentative defense. Since self- or culture-defining moments rarely present themselves either as choices or as clear opportunities for ethical agency, getting clear on first principles or decision-making strategies will not help.

Backing out of a political or ethical context of waning legitimacy would seem to require renovating the architecture of political and moral space rather than choosing between distinct alternatives. Doing so requires a displacement of audience instead of the importation of new imperatives. Not unlike Arendt, who routinely raises a question in contemporary politics only to skitter off to the ancient world, Freud and Foucault displace their readers to the Antiquity of myth and Hellenist ethics. These displacements – a displacement in time, a displacement to spaces beyond politics, a displacement to a different, philosophic mode of speech – offer their readers and interlocutors a liberty of perspective. Uprooted from one vantage point onto the world, deposited someplace that forces on them disorientation in thinking, and then left to find their way back on their own, these readers potentially achieve a different liberty. It is a liberty closer to what Genette calls "the granting of the reader the right to

[83] Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 16.

translate the universe of the work into his own terms… In order to read with understanding, many readers require to read in their own particular fashion, and the author must not be indignant at this; on the contrary, he must leave the reader all possible liberty. In reality, every reader is, while he is reading, the reader of his own self."[84] Freud and Foucault might be said to use these displacements to resettle individuals in a context organized by asymmetries. They return better armed with words to insulate themselves from the potential harms of asymmetry, that is, with a faculty that undoes presumptive claims to authority as it reads, even as it authorizes another whilst this reading gains momentum and voice. Such a claim makes Freud and Foucault's turn to the ancient world far more surprising and intriguing – it must be more than an adaptation of dialogic exchange, of democratic persuasion, rhetorical pathos, agonistic conflict, or cathartic dramaturgy for contemporary purposes.

Here, the social conditions in which psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* unfold are key to understanding the interpretive agency they recuperate. Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic speech each seek to distinguish the terms of self-constitution against the techniques self-narration. If the challenge inherent to "practices of the self" is that they offer something less self-conscious than a pedagogy of persuasion to first principles, then they must invoke a kind of art of being artless. For this art to escape both didacticism and a cloying preciousness requires that the education itself be one of indirection. By separating those techniques that encourage a student to speak from those that encourage action, psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* make use of the disjuncts inherent both in narration and in considered action.

Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices thus seek to leverage the disjunctures inherent to the modern crisis of authority rather than forcing a congruence across domains differently authoritative. These disjunctures open multiple possibilities for interpretive response. We are now prompted to turn to texts or to events with the desire to play a role both readerly and writerly. We circulate through these roles of readers and writers, and recognize them as roles rather than being unselfconscious actors and spectators. As readers, we sometimes succumb to the text, sometimes not; we both follow along with the narration and suppress our capacity as critics, while energetically and unavoidably rewriting as we read along. As writers, we both revise previous narrations by imposing new categories and thus inventing what we discover, and we also create, but most

[84] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 261.

innovatively, in ways of which we are barely conscious. To adapt these claims back to politics, as readers we must be unruly and unfaithful; we need to learn to leverage our role as reader-imagined-by-author against our role of reader-as-interpellated-by text. Only by reading our expected, scripted responses – responses to persons, claims, events – against our actual responses can we come to read ourselves. This reading also then becomes a part of authoring ourselves, of learning to use others' terms in order to narrate our own sense of self, of vulnerability, and of the social conditions of our existence.

To cultivate the capacities necessary for authorship to bear on political authority, psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* rely on modes of speech different from political deliberation. Where liberal theorists of deliberation rely on sincere, organized deliberative contest to reach mutual understanding, if not consensus, psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices rely on a speech of ethical indirection.[85] Psychoanalysis and Foucault's *parrhesia* both embrace a speech-activity that is oftentimes indirect, oblique, and composed of exchanges that are fluid rather than declarative. It is the speech of enactment, in which the text of speech includes a subtle host of gestures, iterations, practices, utterances, and psychic structures. Psychoanalysis, for example, tends to end without either analyst's or patient's making remarks of summation; and Foucault eschews Searle's "speech-act" for creating too contained a performative and instead prefers "speech-activity." Skirting both the originary speech of inauguration or the conclusive speech of declamation or oration, psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* loiter in the "messy middles" of narrative exchange. To return to the problematic of authority, these modes of speech repeatedly traverse the boundaries between epistemological claim and political or cultural practice and instead participate in the work of negotiation – where negotiation is not a bargaining across clearly defined positions but a "working-through" that proceeds any real change to belief, value, or practice.

Psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* both offer resources with which to cultivate those practices of trust and truth-telling critical to the legitimation process for authority. While the speech-activities engendered through psychoanalysis

[85] Many of the thematics of my argument would seem to find common cause with Habermasian discursive ethics. Despite sharing Habermas's conviction that modernity can no longer borrow criteria of orientation from another epoch, but "has to create its normativity out of itself" (7), my project diverges from his in seeking dissensus rather than consensus. For a very different endeavor to read Foucault and Habermas alongside one another so as to split the difference between them, see Amy Allen, *The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

and *parrhesia* remain critical – in the broad sense that they seek to engage and challenge regulatory norms – these speech-activities also seek to be generative (of ethical selves, commitments, responsiveness), which opens the possibility for them to be more politically transformative. In different ways and with different possible implications for politics, psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* offer a concrete set of practices to bring the speeches of generation and critique to bear on one another. As we will see in the next chapter, these relationships contribute to trust and truth-telling matters when dealing with questions not just of ethics but of meaning more broadly, as modernity's religious canopy thins and peters out.

## Practices of the Self and Contemporary Politics

If the practices of authorship and authorization are to move between past and future, they need to be able to speak not just the future-oriented language of justification, or the narrowly individual language of responsibility and liability. Such authorial practices need to be able to assess the legitimacy of words and deeds past, while also extending something of their spirit forward by adapting and sustaining them in the present. Arendt suggests as much when, in *Between Past and Future*, she turns to questions of history, truth and politics, and education to rethink the cosmology that holds these concepts and practices in relation to one another.[86] Taken together, these suggest the need for a different *askesis*, for a training or education that both offers a concrete set of practices for self- and political governance, and one tensile enough to wrap a canopy of meaning about these settlements in the gap between past and future. These practices must sustain the personal, political, and interpretive dimensions of any sense-making framework, and ought to prepare individuals to evaluate persons, claims, and events in the absence of absolute values or certain knowledge. Attention thus shifts to political socialization as a result of this heightened pressure on the interpretive dimension of those practices that would sustain trust and truth-telling in the absence of a common cultural system of meaning. Authorization becomes more than an epistemological problem of first foundings; it democratically involves members of political community in the authorial practices that would define a polity. The attention to authorial practices hopes to cultivate a

[86] In the preface to *Between Past and Future*, Arendt calls attention to its subtitle – "Eight exercises in political thought" that are to provoke "an experience in thinking" to learn "how to move in this gap – the only region perhaps where truth will eventually appear" (14).

vocabulary more practicable, material, and direct. It seeks to emphasize the politics, rather than the theory, in political theory.

Differently from political or philosophic critique as standardly conceived, *askesis* offers something beyond historical reflection or intellectual positioning. Read in juxtaposition to the literature on secularization, these "practices of the self" expand what it would mean to inherit concepts, questions, and "answer positions" from other times and debates. The scholars most associated with the turn to such practices – classicist Pierre Hadot and philosopher Arnold Davidson – emphasize the lively confusion of Jewish, Roman, Hellenist, and Christian practices, concepts, and beliefs in the later periods of antiquity.[87] Both through vibrant scholarly debates, intellectual thievery, and unwitting mistranslations, these traditions borrowed and intermingled. Within our institutions and practices is a cacophony of traditions and languages not perfectly consistent. More than a question of distinguishing "good" from "bad" practices, the language of *askesis* evokes the ancient capacity to distinguish between multiple *topoi*, or thematics, and the practices necessary to "read" and respond to each. The emphasis shifts from seeking absolute values and certain truths to discerning the intuition behind practices in truth-*telling*. Rather than attempting to define a singular "moral space," it becomes possible to think in terms of the contexts appropriate to different interactions, and to recognize that relations that structure these must be read and responded to in different ways.

If "our history was left to us by no testament" – to recall Arendt's phrase mentioned earlier – then the two perils to opening up the authorization process will be over-reaching and domination on the one hand, and something like laziness or moral evasion on the other. These perils are fundamentally political; they bridge critical and political enlightenment, a claim made pointedly by Kant in "What is Enlightenment?" These political anxieties have become absorbed into questions of interpretive practice, through efforts to regulate who interprets and on what terms. Questions of history and narrative, of form and content, have been an indelible part of modern political theory more broadly speaking, from the Cambridge school associated with Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock, to the ordinary language theorists influenced by Wittgenstein, to the French and German critical theorists differently sensitive to the philosophic relation between history and modernity. Nervous about the ethical implications of interpretive claim, these traditions have thought either to severely constrain the

[87] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995).

ethical purview of the critic (e.g., Skinner) or to ground themselves in a mode of critical reflection that is itself outside of historical time.

This is not to say that humans ought to be defined in terms of the non-rational, the emotive, the sensational. It instead is to call attention to something overlooked for being so obvious: that in seeking to democratize politics, we theorists (all of us) have failed to democratize the political authorization process. While we are more than comfortable in analyzing the formalist aspects of democracy, their imperfections and uneven application, the presumption is still that someone is writing for 'the people' – if not a political or religious authority, then someone with philosophic training. This is not to decry philosophers or lament the remove of the ivory tower; it is simply to point out that for all that is written on democratic engagement, the presumption remains that the people are to be schooled, to be spoken for, to be ethically cultivated. They – we – remain objects of knowledge and politics rather than subjects. And so a singular account of critical reflection is sought as what James Tully calls the new "founding patriarch of our political life."[88]

In turning instead to practices and the partial perspective of participants, *askesis* pushes its practitioners to recognize that forms of discourse also imply forms of life, and that a patriarch – no matter how secular, rational, and putatively gender neutral – can no longer serve as unacknowledged fantasy or guiding idea. The manner in which persons scaffold up a language, a set of practices, and a set of interactions implies a living context whose significance escapes beyond what is flat-footedly said and done. *Askesis* marks the encounter between creative personality and shared moral *topoi*.[89] As Foucault's colleague, classicist Pierre Hadot, has argued, questions of literary genre are thus not merely questions of symbolic form as

[88] James Tully, "Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy: Understanding Practices of Critical Reflection," *Political Theory*, May 1989, 17.2: 199.

[89] My use of the term *topoi* here as a rewriting of the term more well-known to political theorists – Charles Taylor's "moral space" – is deliberate. Ancient rhetoric considered the 'topics' (*topoi*) as a "treasury of subjects and forms that constitute the common wealth of tradition and culture." Along lines similar to my own argument here, Gérard Genette has argued that "the effort of psychological understanding initiated by nineteenth century criticism… has perhaps concerned itself too exclusively with the psychology of the authors, and not sufficiently with that of the public, or the reader" (72). This attention to public audience will become especially important in Chapters 6 and 7, when I turn to the political challenges of what literary theorists call *verisimilitude*, or "the idea that the public has of the true and the possible" (72). Genette suggests turning to 'topics' as a means to frame the *encounter* between author and public, so as to engage that which is collectively symbolic: "The passage from what one might call the psychologism of the author to an absolute anti-psychologism may not be as inevitable as it seems…" I leave the

divorced from ethical substance. Instead, the practices and relationships of *askesis* offer individuals the space to develop their authorial skills. *Askesis* provides the chance to work through uncertainties, imperfectly understood situations, and as-yet unarticulated commitments. To borrow a language familiar to primary school teachers, the formal structures of these practices make them into "manipulables." More readily grasped than the abstraction of norms and principles, these formal practices provide a skeletal architecture that is tactile; to take up practices of meditation, ambulatory exercises, memory-writing, or self-assessment (Foucault's examples from the ancient world) is to ask one's self to enact an iterative series of postures, both physical and ethical, whose strength derives from their ability to be naturalized into everyday life. The contexts in which these practices are cultivated and deployed, however – not to mention their fierce insistence on relations of reciprocity – prevent this naturalization from being entirely unwitting. To be sure, for a set of practices to reverberate they cannot be entirely open to critical reflection or they would lose their power of compulsion. Settling on the terms of inheritance, then, must be more than a question of historical record; it entails negotiating a broader set of sense-making frameworks and determining if the community they interpellate is the community that remains. "We" turn to these sense-making frameworks not just with questions of historical record but also for the symbolic resources that will legitimize those historical truths that have become swept up in political and personal narratives. History becomes important for the relationship that we establish toward it – absent the threads to the past given by religion or tradition, how do we move between past, present, and future, and what provides the structure for those linkages?

*Askesis* thus uniquely speaks to the material practices that bear on daily life and negotiate the tension between suspicion (of persons, ideologies, information as being falsely authoritative) and the earnest insistence that trust and truth-telling should be intuitive. More than a simple affirmation of the common and everyday, *askesis* emerges from the recognition that modernity has been unable to shake "a socialization [that is] the interiorization of contradiction."[90] Likewise, the standard pairing of Freud

term as *topos* so as to hold onto the resonance with "moral space," to juxtapose the distance of Foucault's turn back to Antiquity with the psychoanalytic reliance on proximity and intimacy, and to ground my language of "scaffolding." See Genette, "Structuralism and Literary Criticism," in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge (New York: Longman, 1988): 62–78.

[90] Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World*, trans. Alberto Sbragia (New York: Verso Press, 2000) p. 10.

against Foucault calls attention to the perversity of Freud's insistence on the disintegration of the self even as Foucault casts the modern period in terms of the extreme fusion of personality urged by its social institutions. The different outlook onto modernity and onto this intellectual pairing offered by *askesis* is a radical shift in perspective when framing this contradiction. Saying that the subject is one of *variable* dependency alters the dramatic nature of this conflict and suggests that ethics and politics ought neither be collapsed nor entirely distinguished. To collapse the two is to be committed to the claim that all asymmetries are quickly and irrevocably mapped onto political hierarchies, and to be unable to extricate a meaningful account of subject-formation or agency. To insist on the two as distinct is to suggest that we can imagine an ethical independence that nonetheless inclines persons toward political solidarity, which would seem to require either extreme flexibility of mind or generosity of spirit.

Holding ethics and politics in tension requires the adoption of a different vantage point onto politics. The usual confrontation between individual and society, of personality and impersonal social forces, of internal and external circumstances implies a passive, spectating audience – an audience that receives this narration of their history from the public intellectual or critic. As a set of formal practices, *askesis* is instead oriented toward enactment (rather than reflection taken as intellectual cognition) and takes as its starting point the partial, incomplete perspective of its participants. Any audience is an audience "off to the side," chary of being interpellated by either speaker or listener. Where eighteenth century moral education relied on the anxious eye of the parent-citizen, and nineteenth century maturity-ideals relied on the established perspective of adulthood, contemporary *askesis* adopts the gaze that binds both participants into a relationship that, for all of its asymmetries, is one of reciprocity. More than these earlier perspectives, *askesis* seeks a set of structures more flexible in their handling of asymmetries between participants and knowledge claims. Ever aware of the danger that its asymmetries will ossify into hierarchies, themselves replicated in politics, *askesis* uses the dynamics of its interactions to minimize this danger and to prevent any party from stabilizing into a permanent object of knowledge.

Individuals experience the modern crisis of authority either as self-disintegration (in which claims of competing domains leave them uncertain of the ground on which they stand) or as over-stabilization (in which the lived need for stability requires them to deny these incongruities). Differently from previous scholarship, *Crisis of Authority* analyzes the *processes* by which persons and publics respond to this crisis and

come to find a person, claim, or event to be "authoritative." Resistant to taxonomic stabilization, authority is taken to emerge from interactions between persons. I begin by analyzing the psychoanalytic relationship to authority. Evocative of earlier, formative relationships to authority, psychoanalytic practice leverages its asymmetrical relations of risk and vulnerability into a "combative collaboration" between analyst and patient (Chapter 2). Persons emerge from this relationship schooled in a set of interpretive capacities that enable them to distinguish their sense of self, as constituted, from the authorship of their own self-narrations (Chapter 3). Where the psychoanalytic encounter offers a containing space so as to counter modernity's pressures towards self-disintegration, the parrhesiastic relationship functions differently. Rereading ancient parrhesiastic practices, Foucault develops a contemporary model by which to evaluate claims to truth-telling and authority (Chapter 4). Responsive to the modern crisis of authority, such a model does not require individuals to have more or more accurate knowledge in order to evaluate these claims. It can be said, then, to "educate" rather than to "produce" individuals. Where theorists generally fear that modernity's dislocations inhibit self-cultivation and action, through Foucault's readings, I instead recover an expressive subjectivity in which persons' sense of self rests on the proximity of word and deed (Chapter 5). Psychoanalysis and *parrhesia*, taken together, thus capture the twin aspects of a modern self divided by pressures to both self-disintegration and over-stabilization. Moving from questions of subject-formation to public audience, both psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices (with varying degrees of success) cultivate audiences to enter a disruptive discursive space. As a result, they offer insight into how new public audiences "off to the side" might be cultivated, moved, and animated to political engagement (Chapter 6). Given the seeming permanence of the crisis of modern authority in which domains of justification (science, literature, politics, and so forth) are imperfectly congruent, I propose that individuals and publics turn their interpretive authority toward "breaking" those frameworks that seek to stabilize, fix, and naturalize the present. In so doing, these same persons and publics might exert their agency to compose, and authorize, political events. Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic authorities build on trusting relationships of authority to move persons outwards *into* politics.

2

# Risk and Resistance

## *The Psychological Dynamics of Relations to Authority*

### Education, Crisis, and the Vicissitudes of Authority

In Spring 1926, Freud finds himself pulled into a series of legal challenges concerning his associate Theodor Reik a "prominent non-medical member of the Vienna PsychoAnalytical Society."[1] One of Reik's patients charges him with a breach of Austrian law against quackery – for treating patients without a medical degree. Freud intervenes on Reik's behalf, argues his position privately with an official "of high standing," and writes a pamphlet on the status of psychoanalytic treatments that is to be distributed more broadly. The investigation is dropped because of

[1] The incident and quoted material is from "The Question of Lay Analysis" in SE 20, p. 180. The references to Freud's writings that follow are to the translations that comprise the Standard Edition (SE) edited by James Strachey unless otherwise indicated. Occasionally I cite contemporary psychoanalysts; these are all Freudian analysts and contributors to the "relational" branch of clinical practice. Emergent from challenges to classical psychoanalysis, "relational theory" refers to a variety of schools of psychoanalysis. These schools were defined by their splits from classical analysis, splits that when grouped together amount to a turning away from Freud's theory of the drives. Attention came to focus on both intra-psychic and inter-personal conflicts, although the balance between these depends on the analyst. Relational theory also relies on hermeneutic understandings of psychoanalysis to develop the epistemological background for relational theory. My move to emphasize the relational aspects of psychoanalysis both testifies to the vibrancy of that strand of the psychoanalytic tradition and is consistent with its attention to hermeneutics. Nonetheless, I continue to work with Freud's texts and theories in part because I argue that Freud was a *discursive* founder for these claims. To the extent that relational theories work within a broadly Freudian discourse, their contestations can be understood as attempts to revise the very theoretical framework that enabled them. See Stephen A. Mitchell, *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: An Integration* (New Haven, CT: Harvard University Press, 1988).

this intervention and because of the lack of evidence against Reik. In the following year, Freud finds himself defending scientific against religious ontologies as better contributing to the education of persons and political communities. The charge of quackery speaks to the lingering uncertainties in how to classify psychoanalysis, the knowledge on which it rests, and whether it contributes to moral, medical, or political development. Writing about the incident a year later in "The Question of Lay Analysis," Freud comments that the question of who shall practice "appears to be settled by the wording of the law."[2]

Here the crisis of authority is on full display, where the facts of regulatory power are unclear, where justice must nonetheless pronounce on them, where the problem is less one of accuracy ("psychoanalysis does or does not meet the criteria for medicine") than of how to regulate the new and unforeseen. Law's own authority is called into question; any ruling will in some sense be extra-legal by virtue of being unprecedented. Efforts to resolve analytic practice into the domain either of medical knowledge or of charlatanry only re-create the fissure between epistemology and practice that characterizes later thinking on modern authority. For his part, Freud challenges the logic of assessing psychoanalysis according to standards of medical legitimacy, by noting, "It may perhaps turn out that in this instance the patients are not like other patients, that the laymen are not really laymen, and that the doctors have not exactly the qualities which one has a right to expect of doctors and on which their claims should be based."[3] By drawing attention to the roles of doctor and patient, Freud points to psychoanalysis's unique contribution to the crisis of authority. Like medicine, psychoanalysis offers a therapy; like law, it adjudicates competing claims; like both medicine and law, it offers a self-formation organized through resistance and transformation. Unlike either medicine or law, however, the authority relationship intrinsic to psychoanalysis is tested through its performance and not in reference to epistemological evidence or rationalized code.

Psychoanalytic practice thus opens up space for thinking about authority as something more than the imposition of rule. Democratic theorists have associated authority either with the assertion of institutional order or with the contestation of the same. Even those sensitive to the paradoxical relation between liberty and authority frame their analyses along the sharp dichotomies of liberation and domination, resistance and order. As

[2] Freud, "The Question of Lay Analysis," p. 184.
[3] Freud, "The Question of Lay Analysis," p. 184.

a result, any efforts at self-cultivation within this space become captured by the very asymmetries that define it. I contend that the challenge posed by authority is neither to affirm it nor to invert its central terms, but to engage its performance: to contest the symbolic terms that encase and invest it. Towards that end, Freud (and later the relational school of psychoanalysis) appeals to the roles of analyst and patient that frame the experience of resistance and authority in psychoanalytic practice. In so doing, Freud suggests that the psychodynamic dimensions of authority cannot be severed from its epistemological and political projects. Instead, the roles unique to the psychoanalytic relationship enable both parties to confront *how* they interpret and how the analytic *process* recasts the experience of authority that ostensibly structures it. The relational "form" of the analytic encounter – its roles, dynamics, structure – profoundly shapes the authoring of new interpretations by engaging the very conditions of symbolic speech. Ideally, then, authority need not reinscribe individuals within an existing, stable regime. Instead, Freud urges us to consider those conditions under which such a relationship encourages authorial agency and the very rewriting of conventionalized order. Within political theory, the fear has been that such an education merely maps psychic aggression onto political hierarchy. Instead, I argue that the risk and resistance central to the psychoanalytic encounter are also the preconditions for the establishment of trust.

And so I turn to Freud's *Nacherziehung* – the "after-" or "second-education" developed in his clinical writings. In contradistinction to the usual readings of psychoanalysis as a confessional technology or as an opportunity to witness (and so heal) injury,[4] I argue that Freud develops a model of "combative collaboration" between patient and analyst premised on a deliberate disruption of usual social roles. Such a turn may surprise.[5] Any turn toward psychoanalysis may seem to be a turn away from

[4] In making these claims, I seek only to distinguish my perspective from those who work on the "therapeutic state" and Shoshana Felman's admirable work on testimony. Clearly analysts have a therapeutic program (for better and sometimes worse), and clearly one of the dimensions of analytic presence is that of testimony.

[5] Psychoanalysis has been criticized for reproducing structures of patriarchy, of capitalism, and of normalization. The first and third of these important concerns will be addressed later in this chapter; the second concern is beyond the scope of this book. Nonetheless, the intersections of psychology and politics continue to be vital to theorists of cultural and political change. Such intellectual engagement with Freud has long-standing roots. Following Freud's travel to America, psychoanalysis very quickly was absorbed both by popular culture and academic inquiry. In 1909, Freud gave a series of lectures at Clark University. Such scholars as Franz Boas, William James, A. A. Brill, Ernest Jones, and Emma Goldman (among others) were in attendance. The current suspicion of psychoanalysis

politics, and many view clinical practice as an elite indulgence[6] before a rising tide of the medicalization of psychic injury.[7] Psychoanalytic practices, however, contribute two insights to this conversation. First, psychoanalysis is unusually sited at the intersection of personal and collective practices. Within this "intermediate space," Freud restructures the usual dynamics of social asymmetry so as to separate psychic from political resistances. The struggle between analyst and patient creates a space to the side of usual social interactions in which the patient can exercise his interpretive skills and manage attachments, both positive and negative, to others. Such education does not lead to self-liberation. Instead, patients come to interact with authoritative figures without being entirely defined by them. The result, second, is the ability to distinguish between the conditions necessary for self-transformation (what clinicians call "therapeutic action") and the narrative capacity that reads this change back to social and political context. The psychoanalytic relation to authority thus offers a set of "constant practices and exercises" centered on the development of interpretive authority. Through the psychoanalytic encounter, individuals learn to transmute their reading and assessment of others' authoritative claims into their own capacity for self-authorship.

To make this case, I draw on Freud's clinical writings (and their subsequent extension by the relational school of psychoanalysis) to chart how this combative collaboration disrupts the attachment of social roles to symbolic meaning and world-creation. Ideally, such an experience broadens beyond the merely personal to re-school individuals in the art of

thus conceals the fact that Americans embraced psychoanalysis early on. Nathan Hale, *Freud in America: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876–1917*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[6] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991).

[7] Accounts of the medicalization of mental illness are often (rightly or wrongly) associated with Michel Foucault and R. D. Laing. More recently, scholarship and medicine both have backed away from this perspective. Anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann subtly traces the imbrication of psychiatry and psychotherapy, the conviction of practitioners from both approaches that treatment progresses most effectively through a combination of drug and talk therapy; all the while keeping distinct the theories of mind and subjectivity (along with practices of diagnosis, treatment, and knowledge-production) that characterize each one – Tanya Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds* (New York: Knopf Books, 2000). More recent scholarship that focuses narrowly on addiction suggests that the real challenge lies less in democratizing access to mental health treatments than in protecting popular psychotherapy from the moralizing ideologies of neoliberalism. See Teresa Gowan and Sarah Whetstone, "Making the Criminal Addict," *Punishment and Society* 14.1 (January 2012): 69–93. This brief genealogy suggests that more research is needed on the contemporary instantiations of classic questions of science, state, and subject-formation.

maneuvering symbolic meanings across contexts. I finish by considering how such practices might be adapted more directly for politics, and in particular their cultivation of a speech very different from the public disinterestedness that only replicates civic order.

## Formative Relationships and the *Nacherziehung*

Of those few contemporary theorists who engage the paradox binding liberty and authority, most frame their concerns around the figurative power of parentage, with claims to the originality or traditionality of origins, and so with claims to authorship.[8] In his classic *Legitimacy and the Modern State*, John Schaar defines an authority as "one who starts lines of action which others complete. Hence he is, metaphorically, the father of their actions."[9] Some thirty years later, Wendy Brown describes

[8] It is interesting that the last political theorists to consider seriously the concepts of authority and legitimation also felt compelled to write on their psychological underpinnings. Ironically, both Erich Fromm's *Escape from Liberty* and John Schaar's *Escape from Authority* are dedicated to their parents. Thanks to Chase Hobbs-Morgan for noting this detail. If earlier parental relations had been framed in terms of generation gaps and conflicts, I would reiterate the argument made in Chapter 1: that dealing with parentage is now an ineluctable element of bringing moral and political claims to bear on one another. It is no longer enough to say, as Schaar does in *Legitimacy and the Modern State*, that we are "moral children" (p. 349ff). For all that contemporaries might have fantasies of orphanage, or asymmetries unblemished by hierarchy, the project of self-cultivation is made more difficult (and more interesting) by realizing that its terms are not so neat. More than a classic juxtaposition of moral and political project, the two must be considered together. The classic analysis of this claim is P. F. Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" in *Freedom and Resentment and other Essays* (London: Harper & Row, 1974). Freud differs from other philosophic attempts to grapple with the unavailability of a common moral horizon on two dimensions. First, he does not automatically characterize this "unavailability" as "loss." For all that Freud writes about religion as "an illusion," he is aware that patterns of religious practice, belief, and normative convention vary widely. The complicated interplay of religion, science, philosophy, and politics cannot easily be resolved into a story of secular disenchantment. Second, Freud takes seriously the idea that the unavailability of moral horizons is an *inherited* condition – namely, that it requires a complex negotiation with, rather than disavowal of, the past.

[9] John Schaar, "Legitimacy in the Modern State," in *Legitimacy and the Modern State* (New Brunswick, NJ: 1981), p. 26. Ironically, identical wording is repeated in the essay entitled "Violence in Juvenile Gangs," where Schaar adds, "The one term 'authority' richly combines in itself this dual meaning of father and creator" (p. 277). Grappling fully with the practices embedding "authority" would require grappling with the family and with gender; here I am unable to do so adequately for reasons of space. Hanna Pitkin has worked with these questions (and this casting of authority as a "line of action") in *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and especially the chapter "Manhood" (p. 78ff).

freedom as a "project without parents."[10] Such divergent claims are more than evidence of a generational change in thinking about authority. They reflect a deeper tendency of late moderns to understand both liberty and authority in their capacity to originate, to serve as an *auctor* for something beyond oneself. If the nineteenth century turned ambivalently to childhood for these origins[11] – seeing it alternately as a site of moral innocence and as the foil for world-weary political knowledge – then the following centuries struggle to articulate an adequate "second education" that would confront the ineluctable mix of moral and political knowledges both.[12] Differently from religion and moral code – which Freud castigates as no more than "symbolic disguisings of the truth"[13] – psychoanalysis offers a vocabulary for a distinctly modern experience of uncertainty. Acknowledging the modern resistance to psychoanalysis, as well as the hollowness of religion and moral code, Richard Rorty compellingly argues that "psychoanalysis needs to be *used* rather than transcended."[14] The vocabulary and insights of psychoanalytic practice offer a way station while moderns grope for new ways to frame ethical and political meaning.

My return to Freud requires its own grappling with past history in order to recover a Freud as *auctor* rather than one of quackery, power,

[10] Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, p. 25.

[11] Weber and Nietzsche, among others, draw on models of ethical maturity to capture the training necessary to counter the effects of *Bildung* and prepare individuals to live ethically in a disenchanted world. David Owen offers a trenchant analysis of these models, and their political implications, in *Modernity and Maturity* (London: Routledge, 1994). Literary theorist Franco Moretti extends this analysis to the entirety of the nineteenth century, and contrasts the early *Bildungsroman* (that figures adulthood as something to gain) with the later philosophers (who see childhood as something to lose) – Moretti, *The Way of the World*, trans. Alberto Sbragia (New York: Verso Press, 2000)

[12] Such is the claim made, in a very different context, about ethics and metaphors of children by Liisa Malkki: "The ritualized figure of children as unknowing seers divides 'truth' into two mutually exclusive kinds: universal, transcendent, timeless, affective, moral, incontestable truth, on the one hand, and factual, temporal, historical, political, ambiguous, contestable, specific, rational truth, on the other. Children have allochronic, transcendent 'wisdom' as a birthright; adults have historical, factual 'knowledge' (and some may grow wise again when old). Of course, actual children and actual child-adult social relationships do not usually conform to this ritual divide. See Malkki's essay "Children, Humanity and the Infantilization of Peace," in *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care*, ed. I. Feldman and M. I. Ticktin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 70.

[13] See Freud's discussion of education in *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1961), p. 12.

[14] Richard Rorty, "Freud, Morality, and Hermeneutics," *New Literary History* 12, no. 1 (1980), p.181.

or patriarchy.[15] My return calls attention to a certain forgetting of the historical role psychoanalysis has played in American political inquiry. Only a generation ago, Freud and psychoanalysis were commonly taught and read within the Academy. Faculty such as Paul Roazen, John Schaar, Hanna Pitkin, Victor Wolfenstein, and Sheldon Wolin all wrote seriously on psychoanalysis, as did sociologists Talcott Parsons and Philip Rieff, along with later social scientists and feminist theorists Nancy Chodorow and Arlie Hochschild.[16] Universities – but most prominently the University of Chicago, Columbia, and Harvard[17] – have a long tradition of including Freud in the core curricula so central to their institutional identities. Indeed, Freud's influence utterly pervades the long-standing "Self, Culture, and Society" curriculum in the social sciences at Chicago. The current suspicion of psychoanalysis thus conceals the fact that Americans embraced psychoanalysis early on. From Freud's first visit to Clark University in 1909,[18] Freud was much better received in the United States than in France; psychoanalysis was very quickly absorbed by popular culture and academic inquiry both. Historian Nathan Hale argues that turn-of-the-century America struggled to address social pressures contained within an ever-shrinking bourgeois family, and that psychoanalysis offered a much-needed analytic framework.[19] Despite America's ready embrace

[15] Admittedly, Freud did not cultivate democratic practices of authorship amongst his followers or in writing the history of the psychoanalytic movement. Once established, Freud became less tolerant of disagreement as is well-known in his interactions with Adler and Jung and his own essay "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement." Hence my emphasis on my own reading of Freud's texts – as well as that of the relational school of psychoanalysis – as a re-turn and re-reading.

[16] Philip Manning offers a concise history of the relationship of psychoanalysis in American sociology that moves between substantive claim as well as institutional and cultural history. His book includes chapters on Talcott Parsons, Philip Rieff, as well as those opposed to Freud such as Erving Coffman. *Freud and American Sociology* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005).

[17] Franz Boas attended Freud's 1909 Clark University lectures and introduced his student William Ogburn to psychoanalysis in 1910. By the time Ogburn was at the University of Chicago in 1927, he taught psychoanalysis regularly in the classroom.

[18] In 1909, Freud gave a series of lectures at Clark University. Such scholars as Franz Boas, William James, A. A. Brill, Ernest Jones, and Emma Goldman (among others) were in attendance. Nathan Hale, *Freud in America: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876–1917*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 5.

[19] Nathan Hale argues that sociological changes as early as 1870 prepared the ground for the American welcome of psychoanalysis. He charts the enthusiasm and suspicion of psychoanalysis in high and low culture, and contextualizes it alongside the progressive moment, the pragmatism of William James, and the religious movements of mysticism that swept the country at the same time. Nathan Hale, *Freud in America: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876–1917*, vols. 1 and 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

of psychoanalysis, Freud distrusted this enthusiasm saying "America is a mistake; a gigantic mistake, it is true, but nonetheless a mistake."[20] He feared the easy uptake of psychoanalysis would soon dissipate, and so instead looked to France – the country most resistant to psychoanalysis – as a more suitable context for cultivation.[21] Americans, meanwhile, pursued their enthusiasms and sought to make clinical analysis suitable for large-scale empirical investigation. Very quickly, ego-psychology was born and academic interest turned toward cognitive and behavioral concerns.

Since the early 1900s, much has changed. Freud was last prominently discussed in relation to American debates over authority in the late 1960s, when thinkers found in Freud an ethos of liberation, which they praised or condemned according to their own political commitments.[22] Writers in the 1960s seized on Freud's scattered comments about liberation, as well as his use of words such as "censorship" and "repression" and "desire" to argue that Freud sought to free us and our sexual desires from an overly repressive and increasingly authoritarian society. They read into his tripartite account of the mind a critique of the censorious superego and the social institutions fueling it (e.g., Herbert Marcuse) or of the petty tyranny of childish desires (e.g., Philip Rieff), and claimed that Freud promised us liberation and psychic relief from these monsters. Rieff sees Freud as liberating us from our neuroses, as our "rebel wishes" have been sickened by the "diseases of authority."[23] For Paul Roazen, the liberation is from parental authority and is presumed characteristic of "everyone who has reached a normal state."[24] Some went so far as to argue that Freud promised individuals relief from the burdens of responsibility and engagement in the

[20] Quoted by Ernest Jones, *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 270.

[21] "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," SE 14, p. 30–33.

[22] Across the Atlantic, France knew a different history. Initially inhospitable to psychoanalysis, France gravitated toward the field in the aftermath of 1968 – and then was clear to distinguish this interest from the American import. Freud received increasing critique from French post-structuralists (Foucault, Deleuze) for inventing a therapy that perpetuated the capitalist patriarchal state by creating normalized subjects while also insisting that an inherent meaning could be extracted from psychosomatic experiences such as dreams. Deleuze and others continued their exuberant critical embrace of Freud, but a Freud oriented toward capitalism and tradition more than family. Perhaps as a result, the French "return to Freud" was led by Jacques Lacan, who re-read psychoanalysis as organized around desire as a constitutive lack. See Sherry Turkle, *Psychoanalytic Politics: Freud's French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981).

[23] Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. xxiii.

[24] Paul Roazen, *Political and Social Thought* (New York: Knopf Books, 1968).

world. Feminist scholars (notably Shulamith Firestone) took Freud to task for theorizing sexual identity on the basis of male erotogenic zones and sexual development and for inventing a sexualized state of nature in which women are noticeably absent (as Carole Pateman argued). Depending on the writer, authority and the instincts will be more or less favored, but the terms are almost always those of potential revolt and subsequent freedom.[25]

These critiques, with their emphasis on liberation, either misunderstand or elide psychoanalytic authority and with important consequences. Preoccupied with liberation, they counterpose desire to power of all sorts, and so unduly concentrate on Freud's cultural writings and their critique of civilizing forces.[26] By the 1970s, the American academy had largely dropped psychoanalysis in favor of self-psychology.[27] Among American psychoanalysts, divisions with the profession over different interpretive traditions, as well as the necessity of a medical degree (a requirement in the United States, and not Europe, until the mid-1980s), pushed the profession into a period of fragmentation. Only through the philosophically inclined work of Hans Loewald and the later innovations of relational theorists Stephen Mitchell and Lewis Aron did the

[25] Somewhat ironically, Theodor Reik died on December 31, 1969, in New York City. The references cited here include Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Paul Roazen, *Political and Social Thought* (New York: Knopf, 1968); Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1989 [1949]); Shulamith Firestone (1970); Carole Pateman (1988); Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990 [1972]).

[26] The preoccupation with liberation can also be seen in object relations' emphasis on parent-child dyads or self psychology's emphasis on the masterful self. Philip Cushman has argued that object relations theorists Heinz Kohut and Donald Winnicott "unintentionally *prescribed* the historically constructed child that they thought was natural" (p. 286). To some extent, such a confusion between prescriptive and therapeutic models will be unavoidable; efforts to diagnose and theorize will be sensitive to cultural and historical context. One of the reasons for preferring relational psychoanalysis to object relations or self-psychology, then, is that it places concerns about power and its exercise front and center in the analytic encounter. As I will argue in the following pages, an emphasis on the dynamics of resistance and transference makes these power relations, rather than specific social roles (such as parent/child or doctor/patient), the framework for analytic conversation. See Philip Cushman, "Psychotherapy as Moral Discourse," in *Constructing the Self, Constructing America* (New York: Perseus Publishing, 1996), pp. 279–331.

[27] The exception here is Nancy Chodorow, who followed Talcott Parsons in seeking to train as a psychoanalyst. Differently from Parsons, Chodorow drew on her clinical experience to develop a relational approach to psychoanalysis in which resistance and transference are central. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

profession eventually emerge intact.[28] Integrating the work of British object relations therapy and inter-personal psychoanalysis, relational analysts argue that self emerges from formative relationships with early caregivers.[29] Relational analysts give primary attention to these relations and the intrapsychic dynamics that Freud theorizes in 1936, rather than halting with the drive theory he elaborates in 1922.[30] By the late 1980s, however, Foucault's *History of Sexuality* is published, and suspicion of psychoanalysis (and ignorance of the clinical papers) becomes the new history of psychoanalysis in the Academy. As "French theory" takes the

[28] Stephen Mitchell speaks about the "relational turn" in psychoanalysis in *Relationality: From Attachment to Intersubjectivity* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2000). A complementary account can be found in Lewis Aron, *A Meeting of Minds* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1996). See also Jay Greenberg and Stephen Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[29] British object relations therapy concentrates on those relationships or figures (aka, objects) that persons internalize during formative periods; it is most notably associated with Melanie Klein. Interpersonal psychoanalysis concentrates on interpersonal relations across all periods of one's life. Broadly speaking, relational psychoanalysis integrates these two schools. One of the key revisions to classical psychoanalysis concerns the status of the drives. Relational psychoanalysis theorizes motivations primarily in terms of relationships (and the context from which they spring). Differently from behaviorists, relational psychoanalysts do not argue that human action simply is responsive to environment. Rather, they argue that relational context shapes and gives expression to drives, affects, and so on. Or, as I argue, relationships offer the narrative form to shape and work over affective content. Key thinkers in this tradition include Lewis Aron, Jessica Benjamin, Nancy Chodorow, Adrienne Harris, Stephen Mitchell, Owen Renik, Donnel Stern, and Mitchell Wilson. I also draw on Donald Spence and Roy Schafer, who contribute to this tradition, even as they emphasize the hermeneutic dimension of the dynamics of the analyst/patient relationship. For more on this history, see Jay Greenberg and Stephen Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Stephen Mitchell, *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: an Integration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Stephen Mitchell, *Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1993); Stephen Mitchell and Lewis Aron, *Relational Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of a Tradition* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1999); Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A History of Psychotherapy* (New York: Perseus Publishing, 1996).

[30] Nancy Chodorow makes a similar argument in defending her own turn to relational psychoanalysis (both in her writing and in her clinical practice). She further defends her turn to the clinical literature that develops after Freud. She argues, "My starting from contemporary psychoanalysis implies that it is not enough simply to read and reread Freud, as often happens in academic humanities fields, and thus write as if the development of psychoanalysis ended in 1939 with his death. […] A contemporary anthropologist would not end his or her reading with Malinowski, a sociologist with Durkheim and Weber, a marxist with *Capital* […] Many aspects of Freud's theory that, outside the analytic community, so disturb its recent critics were in fact revised, redescribed, or eliminated by psychoanalysts before the critics began their enumeration of Freud's overstatements and missteps" (p. 464). "From Behind the Couch: Uncertainty and Indeterminacy in Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice" in *Common Knowledge* 9.3 (2003): 463–487.

American intellectual scene by storm, it becomes wedded to a politics of identity organized around desire, fantasy, and lack.[31] Such terminology is better suited to the conceptual vocabulary deployed by Jacques Lacan and embraced by Judith Butler and others.[32]

My return to Freud, then, is a return to a tradition with the aim to originate through augmentation, to find resources in the clinical papers at once over-looked and susceptible to rewriting.[33] I resist the turn to Lacan precisely because I want to explore a subjectivity structured around something other than lack and desire.[34] If, as I suggested earlier, authority and liberty

[31] François Cusset argues that French post-war philosophy took on a more politicized meaning after "exportation" to the United States and its insertion into the context of identity politics. See *French Theory, How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States,* trans. Jeff Fort (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[32] Arguably, however, relational psychoanalysis is more compatible with an array of theoretical approaches to what might be called "social constructivism." Those philosophers and political theorists who work most extensively with psychoanalysis tend to work within this tradition. Jessica Benjamin, Nancy Chodorow, and Gail Reed are important examples; the work of philosophers and classical psychoanalysts Jonathan Lear and Hans Loewald also fits more readily with this tradition than with Lacanian thought.

[33] Stephen Mitchell is usually recognized as one of the psychoanalysts most responsible for the consolidation and reorganization of contemporary American psychoanalytic practices into the relational school. These changes result from both theoretical developments and clinical insights generated by contemporary analysts. Mitchell takes Hans Loewald – a liminal figure to both classical and relational psychoanalysis, as well as to psychoanalysis and philosophy – as his touchstone. Mitchell comments that the "signature feature" of Hans Loewald's methodology is to "establish a conventional reading of Freud … and then piece together an alternative reading that becomes Loewald's own perspective…" Loewald studied philosophy for three years with Heidegger before taking up medicine. He later is the training analyst for Jonathan Lear (a philosopher and psychoanalyst) on whose work I will draw in this chapter and also in Chapter 3. Drawing as they do on clinical practice, these changes to Freudian theory build on textual re-readings and practical experience both. To the extent possible, I draw from and cite those analysts who are also philosophers and so attentive to the interpretive and evidentiary practices of both fields. Reading the clinical papers, either as would-be practitioners or as lay audience, invites an authoritative rewriting of their dynamics. Stephen Mitchell, *Relationality: From Attachment to Intersubjectivity* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2000), pp. 17–18.

[34] Christopher Lane argues that while Foucault and Lacan share an interest in subjectivity, and often a similar vocabulary, they differ in their understanding of material reality. "The Experience of the Outside: Foucault and Psychoanalysis," in *Lacan in America,* ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (New York: Other Press, 2000), pp. 309–47. Foucault generally avoids the language of desire despite his respect for the very different work of Deleuze and Lacan on subjectivity. Deleuze recounts, "The last time we saw each other, Michel told me, with much kindness and affection, something like, I cannot bear the word *desire*; even if you use it differently, I cannot keep myself from thinking or living that desire = lack, or that desire is repressed… I need another word than *desire*." See "Desire and Pleasure," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, p. 189.

can only be artificially separated, then any effort to develop practices of liberty must draw on a radical pedagogy that reworks the terms of authority itself. Drive theory casts this engagement narrowly by defining individuals in terms of their repression of unconscious aggressive and libidinal impulses.[35] Fundamentally in conflict with culture, life becomes lived as unsatisfied resistance. In her critique of drive theory, Nancy Chodorow has argued that "Liberation here becomes either freedom from society – the individual apart from social relations – or, alternatively, dissolving all social relations into the self. We are left with little understanding of how new human relations could be constructed or of how people could participate in social bonds or political activity."[36] Lacan radicalizes these claims. He argues that the unconscious drives of sexuality fundamentally define subjectivity; subjectivity cannot escape the inequalities of sexual difference. While his work illuminates the potential intractability of desire, Lacan gives up on the possibility of actions to be defined by something other than lack. In his work as a clinician, Lacan likewise is of limited use. From the 1950s onward, Lacan was notorious for being an *enfant terrible* who refused to abide by the profession's ethical standards and conducted a clinical practice that was notably erratic (including, for example, sessions that lasted 1–2 minutes and were billed as an analytic hour).[37] He largely neglects to theorize

[35] Loewald, and later Lear, argue that Freud began to re-work his earlier conception of drives toward a relational notion of drive in 1920 (with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*), but never completed the work. Loewald grounds his reading of these relational drives in a reading of the passage in *Civilization and its Discontents* when Freud discounts that "oceanic feeling" as the site of aggression. Loewald argues that drives must be part of "secondary" processes (that characterize infancy, after distinctions of self and other) rather than primary processes (when infants lack the ability to differentiate themselves from their environment). The result is an id both in contact with external environments and capable of some interaction. Mitchell offers a close reading of Loewald's re-working of standard drive theory in "Drives and Objects," in *Relationality*, pp. 31–53.

[36] Nancy Chodorow, "Beyond Drive Theory," p. 115. Chodorow criticizes Brown and Marcuse for confusing social and biological childhood development with the romantic, metaphoric equation of a culture childlike in its moral innocence. Hence, this fantasy of moral innocence, "The artist is Brown's version of the Great Refusal: 'The artist is the man who refuses initiation through education into the existing order, remains faithful to his own childhood being'" (p. 137). Although I agree with Chodorow's critique of drive theory, as well as her rejection of the models of maturity and artistry as frames for action, my turn to psychoanalytic relations is not framed in terms of object-relations theory. Object-relations places greater emphasis on the process of childhood development, as constituted by relations to parents and things. I am less concerned with the conditions of childhood growth than with the process by which adults self-reflexively grapple with the activity of becoming.

[37] These notorious clinical "short sessions" enabled him to see six to ten patients in an hour. Although Lacan is widely considered to be a better theoretician than clinician, some dispute this claim. See Judith Feher Gurewich, "The Lacanian Clinical Field: Series Overview," in *Lacan in America*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (New York: Other Press,

those practices that organize the asymmetrical relationship of power contained within analysis.[38] Moving away from drive theory, however, makes it possible to loosen the reproductive power of culture structures, and to open up spaces for agency.[39] The relational qualities of clinical practice afford exactly this attention. Persons become understood as emergent from a series of relationships, each one evoked in the dynamics of resistance and transference constitutive of the analytic relationship. Within this space, earlier relationships reverberate and come to be critically reread and rewritten by the patient. Rather than the quasi-biological drives favored by Lacan, these relationships provide both the narrative form and the affective content for inhabiting the posture of critique. Thinking through those practices of uncertainty that foster individuals' capacity for authorship and agency, Freud's clinical papers, and their extension through the relational school of psychoanalysis, offer a better resource.

I find in Freud's clinical writings, as well as those of relational psychoanalysis, the resources with which to pull apart self-formation and the experience of political hierarchy. Less a denial of the place for fantasy and desire in individual life, Freud's clinical papers focus on those practices that mediate experiences of illegibility – of the betrayal, loss, dislocation, anger by which each threaten the usual relations of trust in community. Freud writes for individuals faced with a collapse of intelligibility. His patients are

2001), pp. ix-xv. See also Shoshana Felman, *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[38] Paul Allen Miller and Charles Shepherdson have sought to strengthen the link between Lacan and Foucault. Miller builds his case in part based on what he claims is an underappreciated affinity, perhaps friendship, between Foucault and Lacan. His biographical case remains built on scattered, circumstantial references to Lacan made over a period of twenty years, along with a misconstrual of Didier Eribon's biographies. It also contradicts the claims made by Didier Anzieu and Jacqueline Verdeaux in interviews cited in David Macey's *The Lives of Michel Foucault*. Despite the inaccuracies, Miller plausibly argues that they share similar substantive interests, although I disagree that these constitute a coherent intellectual conversation. Charles Shepherdson has worked to read Foucault's appeal to *l'actualité* and *le réel* against Lacan's own conception of *le réel*. Although I would argue that Foucault's concepts are better read against Kant and Habermas on modernity, I think Shepherdson's reading is provocative and should be pursued at greater length. "History and the Real: Foucault with Lacan," *Postmodern Culture*, http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/text-only/issue.195/shepherd.195.

[39] To be clear, I am not trying to shut down efforts to read political theory against Lacan. Instead, I am seeking livelier debate about the key assumptions made by any psychoanalytic theory, when political theorists might invoke one framework over another, and the ensuing political implications. Of course, for that debate to unfold, political theory must broaden its interest in psychodynamics beyond a Lacanian framework. I will offer a more sustained argument about how and why one might back away from drive theory in Chapter 3.

newly intertextual – his patients might be "composed of two creeds,"[40] as is the case with Rat Man, or may be from families with other members whose conflict with cultural codes may push them to suicide (e.g Wolf-Man). Caught between shifting cultural codes, these individuals find themselves before that modern paradox of having to believe in certain values, even as they must further accept the impossibility of their realization.[41] Coming to terms with this paradox requires that they ultimately renounce the demands of their conscience, and thus find another narrative frame that might reassert moral and narrative accountability. Left open are the ethical terms on which such legibility could arise, and the ontological stability of any interpretation. Freud recognizes that the cultural symbolic order rests on a web of relationships at once dense in meaning and disorderly in organization. The *Nacherziehung,* or "second education,"[42] of analysis teaches individuals those interpretive techniques capable of confronting, unpacking, and reframing events over-laden with signification. It also teaches individuals to consider these events as susceptible to re-presentation: as elements already defined through mediating relations and whose transformation is possible by restructuring these relations and the narratives that sustain them.[43] Far from being a new beginning "without parents," psychoanalysis turns to past relationships to authority as the proper context in which to cultivate practices of liberty in the present.[44]

[40] See Freud's comments on the Rat Man case history in *Three Case Histories*, ed. Philip Rieff, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996), p. 81.

[41] Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: the Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso Press), p. 90.

[42] In using the term *Nacherziehung*, or "second-education," Freud abandons the now exhausted form of *Bildung* and yet hesitates to embrace the also naturalistic *Erziehung* with its own connotations of upbringing and cultivation. Freud stipulates that "The child … should not be compared to the adult neurotic, and re-education (*Nacherziehung*) is something quite different from the education of the immature." See "Preface to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*" SE 19, 1957 [1925], p. 273. Freud's thoughts loosely follow those of Nietzsche outlined in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *The Untimely Meditations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 57–123.

[43] My own turn to voice and authority is not a simple appeal to inclusion (along the lines of giving voice to the voiceless). Instead it is an effort to capture the process of moving from voice, to the articulacy of authorship, to the assertion of authority. It is an effort to move to theorize this movement – to slow it down and capture how it unfolds – and to offer a new vocabulary for how we conceive old questions of power and justice.

[44] Less a search for ever-earlier origins, the shift to authoritative relationships has generated more attention to dyadic relationships of varying sorts; greater attention is now given to pre-oedipal stages of development. The mother-child relationship competes, for example, with the triangular Oedipal relationships for primacy in insight into later interpersonal relations as well as attachments to "objects" (for psychoanalysts, the term designates the not-always-inanimate focus of individuals' attentions). Psychoanalyst and philosopher

Although psychoanalysis is often thought of as a recollection of childhood, Freud very deliberately structures the analytic encounter so as to stage a confrontation with parentage broadly speaking. The relationship binding analyst and patient becomes a structural and narrative frame through which to conjure up previous relations to parents, educators, spiritual directors, and so forth. More than a moment of therapeutic self-indulgence, the psychoanalytic encounter renders these personages material and manifest. The clinical writings thus draw attention to the nexus of individual psychology and collective symbolism rather than speaking directly to cultural taboos (e.g., the incest taboo) or intrapsychic processes (such as projection, narcissism, etc.). And so the psychoanalytic present is not exactly the present of daily life – it offers a very unusual kind of "moral space"[45] haunted by spectral others and characterized by disjointed temporalities, one in which these affects and attachments come to be focalized on a single personal relationship. Attentive to the restlessness of mind and culture both, Freud instead identifies certain eddies that one might call "sacral spaces" around experiences of family, personal history, and cultural symbolism.[46] These spaces are defined through the very attachments and detachments they contain, attachments that gain in intensity, moral salience, and determinate effect insofar as they are cathected onto specific, personal relationships to authority. This personal relationship frames political and cultural contest on particular terms; psychoanalytic practices offer a practical means to work through this sense of dislocation, its own uneasy parentage, and so to feel at home in it. Freud would seem to offer a site in which to negotiate renovations to an interpretive housing at once personal and collective.[47]

As a *Nacherziehung*, psychoanalysis holds out the possibility of not just making individuals more mindful of cultural codes, but also of introjecting these individuals into the authorial process of originating or revising them.

Jessica Benjamin notes such a trend in *The Bonds of Love* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988). For an interesting survey of leading contemporary psychoanalytic traditions that brings them together through this shared interest in development, see Phyllis Tyson and Robert Tyson, *Psychoanalytic Theories of Development* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). And for a brief history of relevant trends in contemporary theory and clinical practice, see Lewis Aron, *A Meeting of Minds* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1996).

45 Ernest Gellner, *The Psychoanalytic Movement: The Cunning of Unreason* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993).

46 Such is the felicitous concept of Talal Asad. To speak of "sacral spaces" is also to signal an additional shift: toward the clinical siting of psychoanalysis and away from psychoanalytic theory.

47 Bonnie Honig, "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home," *Social Research* 61, no. 3 (1994): 563–97.

Such work is at once clinical and critical.[48] It is critical insofar as it leverages the "therapeutic alliance" into a collaborative, historical reflection on one's present; to do so, it engages in the political work of negotiation and revision of the cultural architectonic that uses the past to legitimate the present. It is clinical insofar as it has a therapeutic aim of ethical self-cultivation that is more than one of cultural integration or generic mindfulness; clinical technique seeks to act on the world by moving beyond theoretical text to touch on actual, existing psyches. Psychoanalysis achieves this double effect, first, by rooting the analytic relationship in a tension between resistance and transference,[49] and second, by making this relationship fundamentally disruptive of any social roles, including those of "analyst" and "patient," that might organize it.

## The Containing Context of Psychoanalysis

What enables a person to become conscious of the failures of broad-scale cultural or political authority, and yet to hold onto authorship (and perhaps even authority itself) as an ideal? In answering this question, one might expect that the forces of resistance and transference would need to generate a different experience of authorship and authority. This suggestion flies in the face of Foucault's notorious indictment of psychoanalysis as a confessional technology, as well as his earlier critique of those modern experts who bind individuals ever-tightly to existing order.[50] To suggest (as I did earlier) that analysis offers a "scene of address" further intimates the forceful influence of the psychoanalytic interpellation, which is usually construed as an experience of being over-written by authorities.[51] These usual critiques, however, overlook Foucault's equally

[48] The distinction between the critical and clinical aims of analysis I borrow from Gilles Deleuze, although I have re-defined these terms. See *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[49] My attention to the centrality of resistance and transference in the analytic relationship places me in the tradition of sociologist and psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow. Where Chodorow gave primary attention to relations of mothering and gender difference, I talk about relationality on broader terms. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999 [1979]).

[50] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1. Mark Bevir offers a useful review essay of Foucault's central claims about liberalism, technologies of the self, and subjectivity (and relevant secondary literature) in "Foucault, Power, and Institutions," *Political Studies* 67 (1999): 345–59.

[51] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *The Anthropology of the State*, eds. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006).

notorious praise of Freud for having "freed the patient from the asylum existence to which his 'liberators' had condemned him"[52] – a claim that underscores the moral and social ecologies that encase the doctor-patient relationship.[53] First, how might the formal organization of the clinical encounter – largely ignored by non-clinicians – offer a different moral ecology, one inflected by cultural context without being entirely captured by it? Second, and substantively, how could the dynamics of this space and its interactions cultivate an authorship not over-determined by force and hierarchy?

Freud's first comments on the technique of psychotherapy come in his work in *Studies in Hysteria* (1895). In the years that follow, Freud comments only in passing about the techniques that organize clinical psychoanalysis; scattered references can be found in the Dora, Little Hans, and Rat-Man case histories. Freud publishes the first four papers on technique between 1911 and 1913, with two more to follow in 1914 and 1915 (delayed slightly because of the outbreak of the war). Freud will remain relatively silent on this question of technique until the very end of his career, when he returns to similar questions in the more literary essays "Constructions of Analysis" and "Analysis Terminable or Interminable," both published in 1937. Taken together, the papers trace a trajectory from considerations that appear arbitrary and mundane – how to bill patients, how frequently to see them, how many patients to take on – to a more theoretically inclined exposition of the psychodynamics that analysts ought to strive to engage. For all of the anthropological curiosity they provoke, these papers initially challenge the reader to compose their seemingly disparate and disjointed claims into something more coherent. And yet the seemingly odd tenor of their claims charts the acculturation of the patient to analysis, as well as the gradual cultural transformation of psychoanalysis from radical enterprise to a practice acknowledged if not embraced. And with these changes, Freud innovates a unique moral space. He recognizes that if the *Nacherziehung* is to undo the work of culture and politics, it must disrupt the usual, unremarked-upon formation of persons over time. Where democratic theorists fear that asymmetrical

[52] Foucault, *The History of Madness*, trans. Jonathan Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 510.

[53] Asylums of the nineteenth century sought to reproduce a social and moral order, with asylum workers elected for their ability to serve as moral and medical guardians both. This unusual ecology will be revisited and discussed at greater length in Chapter 6. See also the discussion of "moral treatment" in psychiatry in Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

relations simply map socio-political distance onto the relationship itself, Freud turns to resistance and transference to disrupt the distance between analyst and patient, as well as between past and present.

### *The Intermediate Space of Psychoanalysis*

Freud's naming of psychoanalytic practice as a *Nacherziehung* – an "after-" or "second" education, one previously "deferred" – suggests that analysis is not just an intense moment of self-examination but an interaction that both opens up possibilities deferred and disturbs present actuality. When John Schaar reaches for phrases such as "honorable obedience" or the "basic piety" of a "sense of the fitness and rightness of things," he seeks to restore a harmony between the internal authority of conscience and external authoritative order.[54] By contrast, psychoanalysis seeks to make these correlations less "fixed and unchallengeable."[55] Instead, clinical practice offers an "intermediate region between illness and real life through which the transition from the one to the other is made," one that captures the atmosphere of "a playground."[56] On Freud's terms, this liminal space should offer "a piece of real experience… of a provisional nature,"[57] that will encourage experiment, play, outbursts, and defiance. In its initial moments, then, the formal regulations of psychoanalysis help people to manage the transition from their familiar legal and social subjectivity to something more profoundly disaggregative. The attention paid in the clinical papers to the ritualization of analysis – where the analyst sits, the timing of the visits, the regularity of payment, the placement of the clock, the obligatory free association[58] – gives its practice a constancy even as the work to follow may be deeply disorienting. Operating in defiance of social convention, and educating patients to a context imperfectly organized by ethical or political rules, psychoanalysis marks the limits of our ability to regulate ambiguities of context through appeal to motivation or legal regulation. Practices take over where rules fail.

Clinical practice draws on those forces of resistance, transference, and counter-transference that bind analyst and patient. To define these forces – through which relations of power reverberate but do not reproduce – Freud must conjure equivalencies between ordinary life and

[54] Schaar, *Legitimacy*, p. 29.
[55] Charles Taylor, "Moral Topography," pp. 111–112.
[56] "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis," SE 19, p. 187.
[57] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through" in SE 12, p. 154.
[58] See "The Psychotherapy of Hysteria," in SE 2; "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis" and "On Beginning the Treatment," in SE 12.

the analytic encounter. Transference is *like* "a stereotype plate" of previous life-images, it is *like* the patient's "preconditions to falling in love," it "*appears* to us … as the strongest weapon of the resistance."[59] At its most simple, transference develops when the patient acts out his unconscious resistances, makes them concrete and manifest, and so creates the common ground between analyst and patient. These resistances are thus "transferred" to the figure of the analyst.[60] Simultaneously resistance to the anxieties associated with the past and the transfer of this moment into the present, transference serves as a bridge between patient and analyst and begins to stabilize the relationship. Such stability results from a forced sharing of unknown and incommensurable experiences. As Freud notes, "[Resistances] do us the inestimable service of making the patient's hidden and forgotten erotic impulses immediate and manifest. For when all is said and done, it is impossible to destroy anyone *in absentia* or *in effigie*."[61] Resistances open up the "we" of the transference space to other times, persons, and affective experiences that become acted out in the space binding patient and analyst.[62] These enactments exceed what can be understood in the ethical language of intent, motivations and self-discovery. Gradually, transference comes to express earlier experiences as patients, "'transfer' their *memories* of significant previous experiences and thus '*change the reality*' of their objects, invest them with qualities from the past."[63] This intermediate region becomes a cacophonous space defined through the spectral presence of authoritative others refracted onto a single relationship. Unlike other social relations, however, the transference relationship is designed to evoke and withstand hostility

[59] Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," in SE 12, p. 100, 104.

[60] My discussion of transference in this chapter focuses on the transfer of infantile objects onto the analyst in the analytic encounter. Transference also has a broader definition that captures the range and depth of affective investment more generally. In an early 1909 paper, Sándor Ferenczi writes, "The first loving and hating is a transference of autoerotic pleasant and unpleasant feelings on to the objects that evoke these feelings. The first 'object-love' and the first 'object-hate' are, so to speak, the primordial transferences." Sándor Ferenczi, "Introjection and Transference," in *Sex in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Brunner, 1950), p. 49.

[61] Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," in SE 12, p. 108.

[62] The relationship of transference to the intermediate space of analysis is hard to pin down. Initially Freud views transference as a space inside of which other repetitions emerge; later Freud argues that transference creates this intermediate region: "*Die Übertragung schafft so ein Zwischenreich*" ("The resistance thus creates a ruling-between"). See Gail Reed, *Transference Neurosis and Psychoanalytic Experience: Perspectives on Contemporary Clinical Practice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 28ff.

[63] W. Hoffer, "Transference and Transference Neurosis," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 37 (1956): 377.

and discomfort.[64] That the analyst endures in the face of assault creates a bond between patient and analyst. Rather than prompting analysis to break down, Freud claims that resistances build up trust.

Considering trust as the product rather than the prerequisite of moral encounter complicates Schaar's own efforts to see trust as a crucial precondition to moral authority. After all, in the usual moral spaces, persons rely on the predictability of stable social roles to orient themselves. Musing on this disjuncture, Freud says that "it remains a puzzle why in analysis transference emerges as *the most powerful resistance* to the treatment, whereas outside analysis it must be regarded as the vehicle of cure and the condition of success."[65] Freud seeks less to stabilize the asymmetries of analysis – that is, to settle the terms of parentage or hierarchy – than to leverage the breakdowns of usual social roles within psychoanalysis so as to generate psychic work. Initially such a claim seems counter-intuitive; the patient would seem vulnerable to the manipulations of the analyst. Elsewhere, Freud alarmingly describes analysis as "a play of forces" in which "[t]he patient brings out of the armoury [sic] of the past the weapons with which he defends himself against the process of the treatment – weapons which *we* must wrest from him one by one."[66] Within psychoanalysis, the patient "seeks to put his passions into action without taking any account of the real situation. […] This struggle between the doctor and patient, between intellect and instinctual life, between understanding and seeking to act, is played out almost exclusively in the phenomena of transference."[67] If not outright predatory, this struggle initially appears neatly to map one set of responses (intellect and understanding) onto the doctor and another onto the patient (those of instinctual life and seeking to act). This reading, though, neglects the tension in the analyst/patient relationship that allows the instabilities of context to become generative.

Notably, the constitutive tension binding resistance and transference brings questions of authority to the fore. To return to Freud's imperial "we,"[68] its third-person form suggests not only the haunting of previous

[64] Relational psychoanalyst Steven Ellman analyzes the cycles of transference, as punctuated by periodic ruptures, in "Analytic Trust and Transference: Love, Healing Ruptures and Facilitating Repairs," in *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 2007, 27: 246–263.

[65] This paper is Freud's second paper on technique, published in January 1912 – Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," in SE 12, p. 101.

[66] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," in SE 12, p. 151. Emphasis added.

[67] Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," in SE 12, p. 108.

[68] Freud consistently uses "we" when discussing access to the space of transference. For example, he comments that when dealing with neuroses "*We* render the compulsion

authorities, but something of the very nature of authority itself. Namely, that authority is at its most unreflexive when the traces of its authorship have been erased into the impersonal "they say" or "we do." If Freud sometimes situates transference as a kind of connection that has missed its mark – in *Studies on Hysteria* it manifests a "false (wrong) connection," in "Screen Memories," as "cover-memories" – then later analysts emphasize its dislocation in time. Such impersonality carries with it a risk: the risk of allowing authoritative judgment to lapse into prejudice. It is significant that Hannah Arendt defines prejudice (a "judgment dragged through time without being reexamined or revised"[69]) also in terms of its third-person impersonality. And yet the proximity of judgment and prejudice here is crucial to understanding the dynamics that makes psychoanalysis operative. Authority is at its most powerful when it can be defended to those affected; and yet, the opportunities for such defense usually arise when authority is under attack, if not already hollowed of its power to compel. In addition to interrogating the personal experience that frames impersonal claims, psychoanalysis captures that hinge moment when authority's attack and articulation are one – when efforts to attack authority belie something of its origination. For these reasons, the struggle recounted in psychoanalysis must be understood as one displaced in time and object – recall, it is "played out almost exclusively in the phenomenon of transference" – rather than as a struggle between moral equals. Offering less an account of a contest between actual doctor and patient, Freud instead speaks of the struggle between different narrative frameworks. The strategic manipulation of relations of power – in a tightly defined context – enables the first steps toward authorship.

Consequently, transference involves not just the patient's transfer of investments from one context to another; it attends to the more significant breakdown of the psychic world that plays out through increasingly interactive resistances. These resistances and transference relationships come to constitute the in-between space of psychoanalysis. Indeed the term translated as "transference" is at times rendered as *Zwischenreich*

harmless by giving it a definite field. *We* admit it to the transference." (In German: "*Wir machen ihn unschädlich*.") Freud thus shades the analytic relationship in a number of significant ways. Socially, his comment bears overtones of the knowing doctor; analytically, the clinical dynamics of resistance and transference suggest that such a "we" is more inclusive; intrapsychically, such access seems to result from a compromise between different psychic faculties clamoring for voice.

[69] Hannah Arendt, "Introduction *into* Politics," in *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), p. 101.

or "ruling-between."[70] Rather than trying to exchange views across a shared problem, psychoanalysis draws its substance from those barely articulate experiences that lack ethical form. What slowly begins to emerge through this scene of disjointed temporalities, of resistances and transferences, of conflict and collaboration, is the cobbling together of the space for a "meeting of minds"[71] across asymmetries. Neither party shares the same interpretive position, a similar history, a similar set of affective investments, or even a vernacular for speech. Quite differently from the deliberative model of democratic legitimation, the challenge is not one of overcoming misunderstandings, ignorance, or inequalities. Instead, it is one of broaching incommensurability, and of deliberately refusing the social conventions that might relieve uncomfortable interactions. Loewald argues that the distorted transferences in the clinical practice resolve with "the recognition of the limited nature of any human relationship and of the specific limitations of the patient-analyst relationship."[72] The exchange is not unlike Iris Marion Young's own metaphoric extension of gift-giving to those exchanges between persons unequal and unknown to one another – exchanges that refuse equivalence, are disjointed in time (rather than immediately reciprocated), and that culminate in wonder.[73] In contrast to gift-giving, psychoanalysis does not rest in the moment of wonder, but pushes on toward an ever-combative collaboration. Psychoanalysis thus achieves a productive tension between its clinical and critical aims: it divorces the critical, disaggregating narration of the patient's personal history from the clinical structure of transference and counter-transference as relations that bind and attach.

### *From Therapeutic Action to Narrative*

Psychoanalytic speech further suggests that moderns have sought the wrong correlation between epistemology, power, and authoritative practice. In social relations, relational asymmetries become ethically or politically repugnant as they are mapped onto imbalances in power or status – when asymmetry begets entrenched hierarchy. Uniquely, psychoanalysis privileges the *relationship*, not the *roles*, of analyst and patient. As the analysis

[70] Other times (and most frequently), the term is *Nachträglichkeit*, or 'deferred action' (literally: 'carried over').

[71] This phrase refers to Lewis Aron's book by the same title. See *A Meeting of Minds: Mutuality in Psychoanalysis (*Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1996).

[72] Loewald, "Therapeutic Action," p. 254.

[73] Iris Marion Young, "Asymmetrical Reciprocity: On Moral Respect, Wonder, and Enlarged Thought," in *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics*, eds. Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001): 205–228.

deepens, the patient "is flung out of his real relation to the doctor" and begins to act out. This response "arise[s] once again from the psychological situation in which the treatment places the patient."[74] The tension between combat and collaboration fundamentally redefines the structural integrity of the therapeutic alliance. By reading the relationship as collaborative, a scene of address emerges in which the disorientation in putative hierarchy, disruption of social and personal identity, and indirect speech make instrumental use of analysis's structures of asymmetry. That the formal parameters of analysis are so rigidly ritualized provides a kind of container[75] for the uncertainties of claims and acting-out that occurs within it. As the analytic relationship deepens, its stability permits the patient to experience and survive perceived ruptures in the relationship. Freud frequently describes the analytic relationship as a "cure of love." As psychoanalyst Stephen Ellman explains, "A form of love will develop from both participants who have been engaged in a battle for meaningful survival of the analytic process and the patient's life. This strengthening of trust gradually leads to two interrelated, somewhat paradoxical results: At the same time that the analyst is trusted and included in the analysand's world, both members of the dyad are more comfortable in being separate."[76] The informal dynamics and exchanges that inhere between those two parties rise to the fore. And these are characterized by fluidity.

The claim that the psychoanalytic relationship is asymmetrical, and yet framed on terms of collaboration and fluidity, is more surprising than it should be. Building from his earlier work on hypnotism – work whose monotonous procedures Freud found personally stultifying – Freud recognizes early on that the patient's relationship with the doctor is integral to the dynamic of the sessions.[77] In his later writings on technique, Freud

[74] Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," p. 107. Freud compares psychoanalysis to "institutions in which nerve patients are treated non-analytically" (p. 101). He argues that patients may have positive or negative responses to these institutions. Since their responses are "glossed over instead of being uncovered," patients simply relapse in ordinary life. Caustically, Freud notes that "what matters is that he shall be free of it in his real life as well" (p. 106).

[75] As a result, psychoanalysts routinely refer to the analytic encounter as a "containing space." See Wilfred Bion, "Learning from Experience," in *Seven Servants* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1977).

[76] Ellman, "Analytic Trust," p. 250.

[77] See "Psychotherapy of Hysteria" for the first comments on what will later be termed "transference." See SE 2, pp. 266–83. The impetus for Freud's theory of transfer has its roots in the hysterical pregnancy of Anna O; where his colleague Josef Breuer pulled back from the relationship from fear of social impropriety, Freud innovated that the *analytic* proximity might be the motor to move analysis along.

works to prevent medical, normative, or even political categories from being stabilized and mapped onto a relationship between patient and analyst.[78] Freud further resists the temptation to invoke the analyst as a model of normalcy.[79] Suggestively, Freud moves quickly to analogize this authority: "Analysis [is] the third of those 'impossible' professions… The other two, which have been known much longer, are education and government."[80] No fraudulent quackery, analysis, Freud suggests, requires the imperfect exercise of liberty and authority. Those occupying the position of "educator" must suspend their existing knowledge so as to investigate new situations unhampered by previous authoritative judgments. Such a model is, of course, an ideal-type. It seeks to capture the intuition behind the research model of education: namely, that researchers adopt the position of "students" and resist received wisdom so as to develop new insights. The analyst's authority derives not from her health but from her facility as an "educator" in interpretive risk – success turns on her ability to engage the risks posed by changes to psychic structure. She must alternately challenge, re-engage, and redirect the energies of these resistances.

Freud thus swiftly sets aside the usual authorizations – medical, normative, political – that ground intervention in the process of subject-formation and legitimize constraint. Taking these disavowals seriously places pressure on the *experience* of analysis, and the reciprocal transmission of insight between analyst and patient. After all, if external authority does not conclusively justify the interpretations made in analysis, then the question of their provenance and authority becomes opened up. Unsurprisingly, then, clinical work since Freud has come to emphasize the undigested, unauthorized nature of what are called "enactments" and the mutuality of their subsequent interpretation.[81] Enactments evoke a

[78] See "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (SE 23, p. 326, 337) and "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis." Recognizing that analysts need some qualification for their practice, Freud requires that they have undergone analysis themselves so as to be aware of the psychic resistances that might affect their practice. He vehemently argues against a medical degree since he worried that medical training was inapt preparation and would over-medicalize the psychoanalytic profession.

[79] See "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (SE 23, p. 326, 337) and "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-analysis."

[80] "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," SE 23, p. 248. Freud says the same in his review of August Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*, SE 19, p. 273. Kant initially named politics and pedagogy "the impossible professions" in *Über Pädagogik* [Lecture-notes on Pedagogy], trans. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1904 [1803]), §12.

[81] Stern, *Partners in Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000), and especially the chapter "The Eye Sees Itself."

state of self – a memory, a thought, a trauma, a perspective – that cannot be tolerated directly; it is an unformulated experience that escapes symbolization. Not restrained to verbal exchange, this scene of address is better understood through an elaboration of the processes that Freud first described in the language of "acting out" and the "compulsion to repeat," and of the analytic work of "construction," and "working through." This emergent vocabulary – these terms appear around 1919 and later move from the clinical papers to more generalizable theories – signals the constructive nature of analysis. The language of acting out in which patients are compelled to transfer and re-enact scenes from the past, makes the analytic exchange more than merely linguistic.[82] With these enactments, the patient discloses larger pieces of psychic structure as he re-enacts past moments before the analyst. More than recollections, the patient acts out an "idio-polis" – a world idiosyncratic to himself and yet opened up through interactions with the analyst.[83] Enactments act out the indirect, unstated authorizations and practices that knit subject-formation to the fabric of social community.

Psychoanalytic enactments thus speak to the sense that the contemporary world – and especially politics – is always mediated through constructed images. Direct confrontation of those intangible constructs seems all too quixotic. With all their indirection, however, enactments offer insight into the forming and undoing of these constructs. They tempt patient and analyst to assert mastery: the analyst to assert an interpretive frame, the patient to counter with a too-ready acquiescence or denial. Enactments thus concentrate attention on the ferment that comes before and after significant change, and challenge the very categories and

[82] Acting-out, repetitions, and enactments are all means for patients to communicate unconscious material without having to verbalize it directly. In moments of acting-out and repetition, analysts are generally positioned as observers. With enactments, analysts are drawn into participation with the patient and are invited to respond in a specific way. These invitations convey something about the patient's expectations and are efforts to provoke corroborating evidence. The concept of enactment was first developed by Theodore Jacobs in "On Countertransference Enactments," *Journal of the Psychoanalytic Association*, 34: 289–307. See also Steven J. Ellman, "Analytic Trust and Transference: Love, Healing Ruptures and Facilitating Repairs," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 27, no. 3 (2007): 246–63; Judith Chused, "The Role of Enactments," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13, no. 5 (2003): 677–87; Judith Chused, "The Evocative Power of Enactments," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 39 (1991): 615–39; and Anthony Bass, "'E' Enactments in Psychoanalysis: Another Medium, Another Message," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13, no. 5 (2003): 657–75.

[83] Freudian analyst and philosopher Jonathan Lear coins the term "idio-polis" to capture the idiosyncrasy of individual internalizations of world in *Open-Minded: Working out the Logic of the Soul* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

roles that would organize it. On relational terms, these enactments speak less to any lack or desire than to an interpretive surfeit – to a proliferation of undigested claims and counter-claims whose repetition suggests a recalcitrance to available explanations. Grappling with these chunks of context forces both analysts and patient to consider the terms that would make these enactments legible. Yet this is hardly a deliberation that presses forward to a universalizable moral viewpoint. The analytic scene presents the drama of interpretive conflict, but one characterized by a frequent exchange of roles across any acting-out and subsequent working-through. For example, the patient may initially interact with the analyst as if she were a parent, only to switch to a tone of rebuke as he reclaims that role for himself. Where Freud's earlier writings on the analytic encounter conceive of it in terms of a "division of labor" in which doctor and patient have "separate tasks," as his theories and clinical applications evolve this language is more or less abandoned.[84] Mapping a simultaneous abandonment of the term "doctor" (*Arzt*) for "analyst" (*Analytiker*), Freud uses the language of construction to emphasize the cobbled-together structures rising out of analytic exchange. If personal and cultural narratives generally receive their coherence from beginnings and ends, then psychoanalysis could be said to linger on the "messy middles" of narratives as yet unstructured by an ending or privileging a claim to origin.

That psychoanalysis is dominated by these "messy middles" affects more than their literary quality. It suggests that psychoanalytic claims are not over-written by authoritative origins or closures: "Only openings and end-games admit of an exhaustive systematic presentation."[85] The

[84] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," SE 12, p. 147. Recent clinical work across a range of approaches has come to emphasize the place for repetitions and enactments over the place for straightforward recollection. Freud's own metaphors are inconsistent; in "Constructions," the metaphors of the patient as reporter on a train or of an archaelogical site suggest the potential for a perfect correspondence between actual event and clinical recounting. As psychoanalyst Donald Spence has written, "The model of patient as unbiased reporter and the analyst as unbiased listener suggest a kind of naïve realism that is hard to imagine, harder to practice, and runs counter to everything we have learned about the way we come to understand the world." See *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1982), p. 25.

[85] "On Beginning the Treatment," p. 123. The allusion to chess may invite a comparison to Wittgensteinian language-games and their reliance on contextual knowledge. In response I would argue that these language games lack the crucial dimensions of relations of power and the unconscious that make strategies within the psychoanalytic context far more consequential. In this same essay, Freud later emphasizes that the experience of trauma must be engaged in a way that is more than linguistic or intellectual (pp. 141–2).

experience of this "combative collaboration" has two salient political and ethical effects on how we "live" changes that ultimately affect historical narrative. First, these practices challenge the fundamentally conservative model of individualist ethics rooted in choice. These middles entirely disrupt the usual connections between wanting, doing, and consequences and so prompt blame and responsibility to be distributed fluidly across the analytic relationship. Where ethics has classically focused on the motivations and consequences for actions, psychoanalysis intervenes in the daily régime that structures these more decisionist moments. Freud casts these "messy middles" as an adult version of childish play, for they permit a suspension and reconsideration of the usual attachment of blame and responsibilities – in a word, consequences – to words and deeds. The result, second, is an experience of affective and ethical availability toward another that depends on collaboration rather than self-restraint. Caught between the moments of entry into and termination of analysis, these messy middles are dominated by cycles of construction and rupture. Just as moments of political change cycle through hope and despair, analysis deepens as patient and analyst endure alongside one another and learn to manage uncertainties. Loitering at the limits of the permissible, these experiences teach individuals to manage the uncertainties attendant on attachment and to learn skills in revising, rebuilding, and repairing in the aftermath of deeper change.

This rereading of Freud, with its attention to collaboration, makes psychoanalysis more than a confessional technology. Instead, relations of power serve as the conditions for the cultivation and exercise of authority. As a *Nacherziehung*, psychoanalysis becomes collaborative in two ways: the play of resistance, transference and counter-transference settles the terms on which past and present authorities will be defined; and this play itself permits larger pieces of resistance to be enacted in the analytic encounter. These enactments, spontaneous and unreflective as they are, provide insight into the psychic structures that unconsciously govern the patient's movement through the world. Themselves often characterized by conflict, they permit the analyst to witness how such conflicts are not "errors" or "false" but adaptive responses to an environment perceived as hostile. Freud writes, "Psychoanalytic treatment may in general be conceived of as such a *re-education* (*Nacherziehung*) *in overcoming internal resistances*."[86] That the psychoanalytic relationship serves as this kind of "after-education" speaks directly to the concerns raised earlier in

[86] Freud, "On Psychotherapy," in SE 2, p. 267.

Chapter 1 – namely, that previous work on authority wrongfully stabilizes its epistemology and authoritative practice.

***Wanting, Doing, and Consequences***

To claim that therapeutic action and narrative are distinct suggests the need to conceive of narrative as something more than conscious, purposeful construction and of agonistic politics as more than contestatory claims. If an appreciation for narrative cannot itself drive transformation, then we are thrown back to the relationality of the psychoanalytic encounter. Clinical process, rather than singular sensibility, provides the medium in which the resistances that invest narratives can be – unpredictably – provoked and engaged. The combative collaboration outlined here charts the emergence of resistance and transference as a means to develop analytic trust while enduring challenges to these passionate attachments; tolerance of this discomfort enables the patient to develop those skills in self-regulation that would permit future recurrences of discomfort to be endured. Yet if psychoanalysis is profoundly relational, it should not leave the analyst herself untouched; after all, for these practices to differ from other avenues of self-cultivation requires that they move both parties. So far, the perspective adopted by this analysis has implicitly been the perspective of the patient. But what of the analyst?

The risks of the analyst bear on the need to listen behind the words, and to exercise discretion in timing, interpretation, and management of the transference. Unlike the adversarial combat of agonism that relies on clarity of position and of roles, this combative collaboration trades in ambiguities. Within such a scene of address, the analyst is expected both to succumb to and resist disorientation. If the relationship demands that blame, responsibility, and other ethical behaviors not map easily onto social roles, then the analyst must participate in the constant code-switching between the patient's social, political, and personal dialects. To do so requires that the analyst accomplish a curious self-denial of authoritative position. As the analyst is invited to experience the patient's world (or "idio-polis"), the analyst must both accept and postpone that invitation. Acceptance entails an acknowledgement of the idio-polis so as to draw it into the common space shared between patient and analyst; such acceptance is necessary in order to uncover the psychic structures that are its foundation, and the affective investments that prevent it from being consciously dismantled. Doing so requires that the analyst "forget" herself; that she allow herself to be drawn into the patient's world and experiences, rather than insisting on her own world or knowledge-base

and using these as a point from which to directly challenge the patient. At the same time, in order to preserve her role as "analyst," the analyst must hold some part of herself at a remove. Paradoxically, the party in the psychoanalytic pair who initially appears structurally advantaged faces the greatest challenges of ethical open-ness and responsiveness.[87]

The risks for the analyst, then, include the failure to suppress her own subjectivity, botching the timing such that the patient's defenses re-engage, and getting caught in the constant switching between roles and inadvertently reverting back to "instructor." Since the analytic encounter is not governed by commonly shared knowledge – the patient holds all knowledge about his past and motivations, even if unconsciously so – there can be no neutral, objective sense in which the analyst might "get it right." Likewise, there is no ideal ethical posture – of mutual respect, of impartial neutrality, of empathetic identification – to adopt.[88]

Some contemporary analysts have acknowledged the strain that results from acting within an illusory relationship in which they are effectively instrumentalized and turned into objects viewed with hostility.[89] Inevitably, at some point the analysis will touch on something intolerable enough that the patient will not be able to claim the experience. These are moments when the combative collaboration breaks down and the process of moving from therapeutic action to narrative halts. Sometimes

[87] Rather neatly, such a reading of the psychoanalytic relationship turns many usual models of self-cultivation on their head. The advantage of the metaphor of education, is that it requires that those mapped onto the position of "educator" learn to suspend their existing knowledge so as to investigate new situations unhampered by previous authoritative judgments. Such a model is, of course, an ideal-type. And again, such a model is an ideal-type. It presumes that the analyst has been well-trained in clinical technique and continues to consult with a supervisory analyst – a relationship in which the analyst returns to the role of student. Ethically, it places the greater burden of responsiveness on those who would claim to "know something."

[88] Even as western philosophy has come to assimilate "listening" to postures of care and compassion, analytic listening can take many forms. These might include: listening for thematic unity; for parallels in formal construction of utterances, dreams, or memories; with therapeutic urgency for material that seems immediately significant; for claims about a manifest referent that are also claims about the doctor/patient relationship; and empathic listening. These conventions in listening are elaborated in Donald Spence's discussion of the "analytic competence" that organizes the analytic encounter, as distinct from the "normative competence" that governs everyday conversation. See *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth*, pp. 109–117. For more on the intricacies of "analytic neutrality" see Hans Loewald, "Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis," in his *Papers*.

[89] Sarah Kofman's interpretation of this exchange captures the element of potential frustration it contains; she likens it to the young child's presentation of his fecal matter as a "gift" to his parents. Proper disposal of this "raw material" (*Rohstoff*) is their charge to bear. See *Un métier impossible* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1983).

this discomfort prompts the defensive reaction that one analyst, Donnel Stern, has framed as: "'*I* am not contemptible, *you* are contemptible,'" in which the mutuality of the relationship becomes an excuse to displace blame. The practice of psychoanalysis suggests that grappling with those unacknowledged aspects of self likewise does not result from coherent verbal exchange or cognitive understanding. Such changes come, over time, by changing the experience of the relationship *for both parties*. To become world-expanding, both parties must survive hostility so as to open the possibility for trust. With the development of that capacity for relatedness, comes the ability to pry traumatic experience apart from the *work* of collaboration. To return to Stern, "Insight into this changed state of affairs, when it plays a role, comes later… [T]herapeutic action lies in becoming a different person, usually in a small way, in the here and now."[90] Such changes are not the swift strokes of lightning self-transformation often romanticized in politics and literature. They are part of a broader, more subtle set of accompanying shifts in psychic structure. In this sense, psychoanalysis seeks less to change one's mind than to offer a formal context that ensures that minds are changed. The narrative form of the analytic relationship serves as a housing in which to work through conflicted, overlapping experiences, from which a more coherent posture of critique might later be adopted.

## The Dora Case History

It is tempting to turn to Freud's case histories to vindicate or condemn the psychoanalytic process.[91] Previous readers have aestheticized these

[90] Stern, pp. 721–722.

[91] The literature on Dora is substantial and reflects a variety of interpretive trends over its 100-year history. Dora, in reality Ida Bauer, is given a fuller history than that of her psychoanalytic identity in Hannah Decker's *Dora, Freud and Vienna 1900* (New York: Free Press, 1991). Hannah Decker also contributes one of the earliest readings of Dora to question the masculinist medical and social context of psychoanalysis. Hannah S. Decker, "Freud and Dora: Constraints on Medical Progress," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Spring, 1981), pp. 445–464. More lyrically, Hélène Cixous's *Portrait of Dora* adopts the case history to the theatrical mode so as to hold onto the embodied sense of psychic enactments. Her drama marks further the meeting of written discourse as it unfolds linearly, against the recursive logic of speech. Cixous's emphasis on doors and the passage through calls attention to containing space of psychoanalysis as a container that both protects but can also be broken. Hélène Cixous, *Portrait of Dora* in *Selected Plays of Hélène Cixous*, eds. Hélène Cixous and Eric Prenowitz, trans. Ann Liddle (New York: Routledge, 2004). For a searching review of *Portrait of Dora*, see Martha Noel Evans, "Portrait of Dora: Freud's Case History As Reviewed by Hélène Cixous," *SubStance*, 11(3), Issue 36 (1982): 64–71. Toril Moi diverges from her contemporary readings that

cases to emphasize their "disarming qualities" of fiction or, more critically, a "phallocentric epistemology," that shows up the cultural limitations of analytic technique.[92] These readings fail to note that Freud's case histories were written *before* his writings on analytic technique and before the complete theorization of relations of transference and countertransference, or even the topographical model that divides the psyche into the regions of id, ego, and super-ego. Returning to the Dora case (1906), then, offers an opportunity to look at a "hard case" – a failure in many respects, it is also the case that prompted Freud to revise his understanding of the analytic relationship (between 1911 and 1917). If the previous sections have analyzed the ideal relationship between analyst and patient, then the Dora case permits us to ask whether any therapeutic action is possible under imperfect circumstances; it illuminates the frictive point of contact between interpretive and personal authority. The failures of her case also illuminate the conditions under which this relationship might ground a space between fantasy and actuality in which facts, and the

sought political potential in hysteria or identified problems of feminist representation. Instead she argues that Freud's case oscillates between fragmentation and totality and concludes by critiquing its "phallocentric epistemology." Toril Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy: Sexuality and Epistemology in Freud's 'Dora,'" *Feminist Review* No. 9 (Autumn, 1981): 60–74. See also Patrick Mahony, *Freud's Dora* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); and the anthology compiled by Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kane, eds., *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, 2nd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[92] Later readings of Dora concentrated on the so-called "novelistic" tendencies it shared with Freud's other cases. The most classic account to cast this case as fictional narrative belongs to Steven Marcus, "Story, History, Case History," *Partisan Review* (Winter 1974) and re-printed in *Essential Papers on Literature and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Emanuel Berman (New York: New York University Press, 1993): 36–80. Hermeneutic psychoanalyst Donald Spence queries Marcus's account by arguing that he succumbs too quickly to "the satisfaction of finding a narrative home for the symptom, dream fragment, or piece of behavior" and so "completely overshadows any doubt as to the credibility or validity of the explanation" (7). Spence concludes by suggesting that persons give up "the prompting voice of the narrator" so that "we shall begin to see for the first time how the narrative account has blinded everyone" and seek a different genre by which to preserve "clinical wisdom," (21) – Donald P. Spence, "When Interpretation Masquerades as Explanation," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 34 (April 1986): 3–22. Jessica Benjamin calls Spence on this contradiction between his hermeneutic analysis and his alternatives that "implicitly reaffirm the scientific criteria of truth," (483). She worries that the hermeneutic tendency in psychoanalysis will only reify scriptural authority in the guise of the doctor (485) – and so reminds of Foucault's thaumo-dramaturgical impulse all over again. See Jessica Benjamin, "Comment on 'When Interpretation Masquerades as Explanation,'" *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 34.2 (April 1986): 483–487. Many of these essays, and others central to feminist and literary readings of Freud, are collected in *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, 2nd edition, eds. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

ethical imperatives attached to them, have ambivalent status. The facts of the case are well-known; they are worth rehearsing here, however, to understand how and why what should be a "containing space" remains unduly porous to the effects of patriarchy. A friend of Freud's (who valued Freud's earlier, discrete treatment of a venereal disease) sent his daughter to be analyzed by Freud so as to end her "imagined" accusations of sexual advances made by his close friend, Herr K. Through the course of an intensely charged analysis, Freud uncovered a tangle of half-hidden relationships; Dora's father was having an affair with Frau K, Herr K viewed Dora as compensation for his wife, and Dora had ambivalent sexual feelings toward all three. Even more painful is Freud's response; as he pieces together the picture of Dora's environment, he continues to push her to confront her own confused emotions. Worse, he fails to recognize his own feelings for Dora and, the counter-transference he directs toward her, a failure that ultimately shatters her tentative trust in him and brings the analysis to a halt.

The terms on which to read this case are stubbornly elusive. Certainly Freud's treatment of the Dora case underscores the notion that the authoritative practices of analysis rest on their distinction from the everyday social context organized by power.[93] As Dora enters analysis, Freud's position of authority has already been assimilated to paternal authority (as well as to the train of doctors Dora has previously seen[94]) with disastrous effects on her transference relationship to Freud.[95] Dora's treatment is compromised from the outset. How, then, to read the case history? Feminists might emphasize the collusion of two patriarchs. Foucauldians

[93] "On Beginning the Treatment," p. 125. In "Psychotherapy of Hysteria," Freud clarifies that the analyst should be friendly toward the patient, while recognizing that the patient's response is not an expression of personal friendship or hatred. See SE 2. Freud expands this advice into a distinction between the affective world of the analytic encounter and the social world in "Observations on Transference-Love" in SE 12, pp. 159–171.

[94] Freud notes that Dora "would speak very contemptuously of the physicians whose perspicacity she had evidently over-estimated beforehand" (p. 70). This information is not provided to the reader at the beginning of the case study, but rather it emerges in a passage in which Freud defends his own interpretive authority against Dora's perceived efforts at concealment. See *A Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, pp. 68–70.

[95] Freud makes a similar comment as regards transference: "It has come to my knowledge that some doctors who practise [sic] analysis frequently prepare their patients for the emergence of the erotic transference or even urge them to 'go ahead and fall in love with the doctor so that the treatment may make progress'. I can hardly imagine a more senseless proceeding." In the first edition, instead of the word "frequently' (*häufig*), Freud employs "early" (*frühzeitig*) – perhaps an unintentional reference to his early blunders with Dora. See "Further Recommendations on Analytic Technique (III): Transference-Love" in SE 12, p. 161.

might emphasize the forced confession of Dora's "fancies" as Freud "brings her to reason" – which misses the fact that Dora (like all of Freud's patients) never confesses.[96] Indeed, she forces a confession from her parents and Herr K, and demands that Freud accede to her pacing of the treatment. One might deliberate between a literary reading such as those of Leo Bersani and Jane Gallop, or a scientific reading such as David Massey and Fred Crews. Or one might return to where this chapter opened – the crisis of authority and evidence – and find in Dora's case an illustration of the politics of resolving this crisis. After all, psychoanalysis challenges its interlocutors with a discourse that seeks to distill scientific claims to certainty while also emphasizing the density and opacity of meaning. As Gallop notes mischievously, to side with either scientific or literary accounts also implies dropping any recognition of psychoanalysis as an imperfect, context-driven practical activity. Usually "politics" is restricted to the charged exchange between analyst and patient, between symbolic enactment and historic truth, between literary and scientific accounts. To see the Dora case as "political" is to acknowledge the role played by psychoanalysis in adjudicating between competing claims to legitimizing authority and epistemological evidence.

In Dora's case, the "imperfection" in Freud's clinical practice is a failure to recognize its intermediate space, and to allow in the politics of Dora's milieu. The boundary that should protect the containing context of analysis from repercussions in social reality becomes porous. Dora associates Freud readily with her father and only weakly to her mother and the K's. Focused on Freud-as-father, Dora desperately wants recognition of her point of view. Traces of this demand register with Freud and reappear in his reconstruction of the sessions: "She was almost beside herself at the idea of its being supposed that she had merely fancied something on that occasion."[97] Rather than reading these pleas as a repetition of scenes from Dora's social world, Freud muses, "For a long time I was in perplexity as to what the self-reproach could be which lay behind her passionate repudiation of this explanation of the episode. It was justifiable to suspect that there was something concealed, for a reproach which misses the mark gives no lasting offense."[98] Freud over-emphasizes the element of resistance in Dora's reaction; he reads her as hiding some kind of culpability or fantasy that threatens her standing in her social world. Instead, Dora's agitation

[96] Sigmund Freud, *A Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Touchstone Books, 1997 [1907]), p. 20.
[97] Freud, *Dora: A Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, p. 39.
[98] Freud, *Dora: A Fragment*, p. 39.

enacts the need of a different kind of recognition. The adults in her life have betrayed their adult roles to such an extent that they threaten to overwhelm her entire sense of self. If anything, she is trying to flee that community and the way that it regulates disputes amongst its members. In repudiating Freud's interpretation, Dora seeks to cultivate her own authority to step beyond her social world. Deeply invested in her social world, Freud can neither absorb Dora's sharp ripostes nor contextualize his own attachment. Lacking an adequately reciprocal interaction that might enable him to analogize his desire for attachment with Dora's longing for parental support, Freud simply rewrites Dora back into her social world.

By treating his work space as his personal space, Freud steps out of the relationality of the analytic context and back into a social context organized around a conflict between self and order, individual and norm, subjectivity and power. As Toril Moi and Jane Gallop have argued, the influx of these norms colors Freud's interpretations and corrupts his epistemology.[99] Freud's failure here, however, suggests something about the nature of psychoanalytic evidence rather than the inescapability of patriarchy. After all, *each* of Freud's cases (not just Dora's) demonstrate uncertainties in interpretation and an unstable epistemology. Psychoanalyst Donald Spence notes that all fragments in analysis lack a clear "narrative home" and laments that they "can never function as true archives."[100] But the demand for a different consideration of the facts, either in analytic process or in reading a case history, has "more far-reaching issues than the presentation of data," as Jessica Benjamin states. She continues, "It requires a critical self-awareness not only about psychoanalysis, but also about the truth claims advanced by modern science."[101] Benjamin and Spence

[99] Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy." Jane Gallop polarizes psychoanalysis and feminism so as to make intellectual fire from their sparks in *The Daughter's Seduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982). In Gallop's mischievous reading of Freud's tendency to literary self-aggrandizement, she concludes: "Now, after having given myself over to this analogy, I feel a little ashamed, a little cheapened. It was all too easy to prove Freud merely literary, to mirror our avoidance of scientific, humanistic, therapeutic responsibility in Freud's escape from loyalty to the task. In Freud there is ever-present a tension: the choice to read as literary text is always a bracketing of something practical which cannot be forgotten" (p. 51). Jane Gallop, "The Seduction of the Analogy," *Diacritics*, 9.1 (Spring, 1979): 45–51.

[100] Spence, "When Interpretation Masquerades as Explanation," p. 19. See also his discussion on the hermeneutic effort to balance "narrative" and "historic" truths in *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1984).

[101] Benjamin, "Comment," p. 484. See also her discussion of the Dora case in "Primal Leap."

push readers to recognize that Freud's later writings on analytic technique unusually step back from generic scientific appeals to mastery – for more or better evidence – and abandon efforts to control the representation of claims or the outcome of analysis. Freud's failures with the Dora case come to underscore the authorial potential of analytic practice in rewriting the terms of ethical engagement – that is, when the rules organizing the containing context of analysis are respected.

In later writings, Freud recasts both the instability of evidence and claim and the ethics attached to either. The analytic *Nacherziehung* comes to suspend the tangled connections between wanting, doing, and consequences – connections that, in the social world, generally are mapped onto those who act and those who are acted upon. Children develop such connections at school, which likewise offers a context for "arousing interest in life in the world outside." In order for this "research instinct" to be stimulated, and in order for children to learn, Freud cautions (some five years later), "The school must not take on itself the inexorable character of life: it must not seek to be more than a game of life."[102] Likewise, psychoanalysis ideally allows patients to inhabit a liminal space of psychic reality, where, as Dorrit Cohn argues, "a non-factual phenomenon must be regarded as a historical fact."[103] This is not to say that patients' problems are unreal, simply that their psychic reality must be taken, initially, as concrete. Analysis grants a patient's actuality footing amidst a broader context of epistemological uncertainty. Tellingly, the recountings of treatment are understood as case histories (*Krankengeschichte*) rather than case fictions. Not only is the analytic context "containing" in moments of self-disintegration, it provides a context in which to cultivate interpretive agency. As a "second education" for adults, not children, psychoanalysis recaptures the dynamics of this game so as to rewrite the terms on which cultural and ethical imperatives are experienced.

Where power – be it the power of formal rule or of informal convention – compels an alignment between actions and consequences, psychoanalysis suspends this alignment in order to reconsider the grounds that would justify it. In the Dora case, Freud has not yet learned the lesson so triumphantly pronounced by another patient, Little Hans (1909). Little Hans recognized at the precocious age of four that "wanting's not doing, and doing's not wanting" – that, unlike actions, one should not be held responsible for fantasies and desires. Dora's ambivalent feelings toward

[102] Freud, "Contributions to a Discussion on Suicide," SE 11, 1925 [1910], pp. 231–2.
[103] Dorrit Cohn, "Freud's Case Histories and the Question of Fictionality," *Oxford German Studies*, Vol. 25 (1996): 1–23, 22–3.

an impatient lover, her uncertain lesbian emotions, and her unsurmounted oedipus complex all bear the marks of an unhappy teenager going through puberty. The painfulness of these feelings is heightened by their direction not towards others her own age, but towards adults who themselves mistake wanting and doing in order to duck their own responsibilities. Freud's mistake is to implicate Dora directly in her corrupted environment, and to hold her responsible for her own half-developed fantasies, as well as for the actions of the cruelly self-serving adults around her.

Dora's analysis takes on a progressively sterner character as Freud pushes her to question her involvement in the sexual relations of the adults around her. Freud counters each interpretation Dora offers of the situation with his own, often prefaced with comments such as "And now, what have your recollections have to say to this?"[104] Dora's own capacity for discernment forces Freud to refine and hone his interpretations continually. Often Dora simply ignores those interpretations she considers facile. Despite her own vulnerable position – after all, she was consigned to this analysis against her will – Dora manages to stand her ground.

These mistakes come to a head in Freud's famous statement, "There is no such thing at all as an unconscious "no.'"[105] In another paper, Freud explicitly acknowledges that this claim sounds like "heads I win, tails you lose."[106] He responds by saying that none of the patient's claims are taken to be "objective"; analysis rests on the disjuncture between what is said and what is enacted. Negative statements are peculiar in that they lack substantive content – Freud notes that they resemble "the *tu quoque* ["you too"] arguments of children."[107] An over-emphatic "no" often belies the presence of other, censored desires that might push the patient to say "yes." Freud's preceding claim in the case history makes just this point: "No other kind of 'yes' can be extracted from the unconscious." By refusing admission of a threatening idea, 'no' statements serve as a crude form of boundary policing of the self.[108] Ultimately the interpretation of

[104] Freud, *Dora: A Fragment*, p. 64.
[105] Freud, *Dora: A Fragment*, p. 50.
[106] Freud, "Constructions in Analysis," SE 23, p. 257.
[107] Freud, "Constructions in Analysis," SE 23, p. 257. That these 'no' statements are said by adults seeking adult education is significant. Freud explains that an adult "who wanted to throw back abuse would look for some really exposed spot in his antagonist and would not lay the chief stress upon the same content being repeated." Freud, *Dora: A Fragment*, p. 28.
[108] In "Negation," Freud writes that the crudest forms of judgment first made by children are the decisions "It shall be inside me" or "It shall be outside me" that occur during the oral phase of development. Sigmund Freud, "Negation," in SE 19, p. 237.

*how* the patient *says* "no" matters most. Striving to articulate the half-formulated judgments spoken as a censorious "no," the analyst traces its tangle of motivations.[109] In the ideal context, analytic authority facilitates the nascent authorship of the patient; the patient learns to claim the past so that the past cannot claim her.

By this interpretation, Freud's responses to Dora are acceptable, if insensitive, up to a point. He is right to disregard her substance-less protests in the face of his own conjectures. Although Dora can call attention to her traumatic experiences, her response remains reactionary; she gropes for the words to articulate her lived experience of trauma, the alternate self-understanding she would claim for herself, or the narrative that would write her into a new context. Instead, Freud ought be faulted for allowing the playful quality of analytic exchange to become overwritten by the leaden literality of social context. While elsewhere Freud cautions against an overly literal response to the patient,[110] Freud allows his interpretation to be skewed by his feelings toward Dora. Initially almost bored – Freud notes that Dora's continual, nervous cough and the "wearisome monotony" of her complaints against her father indicate they are connected[111] – Freud's interpretations become narrow and insistent. Denying his own attachments to Dora, Freud refuses to brook either Dora's counter-interpretations or a disinterested dismissal of them. As Freud's interpretations become increasingly uncomfortable and as his counter-transference develops, Dora rather ingeniously turns the tables on him. After a few months of analysis, she arrives for her session and announces her intention to leave in two weeks. Ironically, elsewhere Freud proposes setting exactly this deadline in difficult cases that have hit a stretch of resistance. Threatened by the impending retraction of analytic "love," the patient's resistances suddenly give way and progress again becomes possible. Freud vaunts this technique as a "heroic remedy" for it can only be used the once – the timing must be impeccable.[112] Dora adroitly turns this technique against Freud, by threatening to withdraw from analysis at a fixed date. Interestingly, she continues to participate

[109] Freud emphasizes that the analyst's authority does not rest on the validity of any single interpretation or "construction": "We do not pretend that an individual construction is anything more than a conjecture which awaits examination, confirmation or rejection. We claim no authority for it, we require no direct agreement from the patient, nor do we argue with him if at first he denies it." See "Constructions in Analysis," SE 23, p. 265.

[110] Freud, "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis," SE 12, pp. 111, 115.

[111] Freud, *Dora: A Fragment,* p. 39.

[112] Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" SE 23, p. 317.

fully in the sessions, working through two dreams, which suggests that her participation was more than just the fulfillment of a contract. Her two-weeks notice having expired, and she promptly departs, leaving Freud with the feeling he has been bested.

Freud's sense of his own authority remains conflicted. He clearly considers the case as a tour de force – in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess he describes it as having "opened nicely to his collection of picklocks" – but he delays publication because of its incomplete state. When Freud finally publishes it in 1907, he feels compelled to present it as "A Fragment of an Analysis." The case leaves Freud more aware of the fragility of his clinical and narrative authority; as will be discussed in Chapter 6, *all* of his case histories are presented as fragments and manifest anxiety over the historical facts (*Tatsache*, or deed-things) of his patients' past. Freud comes to find these instabilities to be the very fulcrum of the theoretical and clinical aims of psychoanalysis. Forced to recognize the clear signs of counter-transference the case demonstrates after its publication, Freud also faces something of a professional comeuppance.[113] His subsequent reflections on his choice of the moniker "Dora" lead him back to uncomfortable memories of a childhood servant by the same name, who was obliged to leave abruptly from the Freud household. Ultimately, in over-playing his hand, Freud took a number of professional risks and lost. For her part, Dora returns to her life as Ida Bauer. Soon after her departure, she confronts Herr and Frau K and wrests confessions and apologies from them both. Although her hysteria never entirely clears up, she chooses to return to analysis (under a female psychoanalyst) to address it. Even when historical fortune turns against her – she barely manages to leave Vienna for France in 1939, and from there sails to New York – she finds the resourcefulness necessary to flee a political regime that preferred to institutionalize its distinctions between the so-called "sick" and "healthy."

### Psychoanalysis as Combative Collaboration

Psychoanalytic practices clarify the conditions under which resistance – resistance to one's childhood past, to authoritative others, to one's unacknowledged self – might be made ethically generative. Risk relies on a dislocation in authoritative relationship – that the authority "confronted" is assimilated to the figure of the analyst but is generally symbolic of

[113] It is notable that Freud opens the Dora case with a long excursus on his worries about his professional reputation and about recognition for the psychoanalytic profession.

someone or some other persons. Psychoanalysis thus permits an experience of contest that is not over-determined by cultural hierarchy, one that is collaborative across asymmetries, and one that makes trust a product rather than a precondition of the relationship. It would be naïve to argue that all relationships to authority are susceptible to these same dynamics, or that patients might exit analysis ready to seek such combative collaboration in all of their other inter-relations. And yet psychoanalysis enables patients to be more canny in approaching such hierarchies and to exert authorship within them to the extent possible.

We are now in a better position to return to the Reik case and to recognize that it had provoked a crisis of evidence and authority. That is, Reik, and psychoanalysis more broadly, had called into question both what body of knowledge counts as evidence of healing, as well as the medical authority that vouches for it. Psychoanalytic practice suggests that modern authority cannot be stabilized across institutions and epistemological categories. When, to his reading audience, Freud argued that psychoanalysis was "like surgery" but not part of medicine, that it was "like education" but not found in schools, he relied on his own interpretive authority to convince. The constant suspicion of psychoanalysis arises from the assertion of personal authority in relation to two different domains: in relation to the analytic context and in relation to public audience. The very clinical dynamics that permit psychoanalysis to be collaborative and therapeutic, also prevent it from easily obtaining public approbation. As a result, psychoanalysis grates uneasily against our usual ways of conceiving and regulating legal subjectivity. But the analyst's authority rests on more than personal charisma.

The relational dynamics of psychoanalysis cue us to an important blindspot in how we have come to think about the relationship between trust, truth-telling, and authority. In Freud's reflections on the Reik case, Freud ventriloquizes a third party skeptical of the analytic scene. This third party desires the opportunity to sit in on an analytic exchange as a means to monitor and provide oversight (while also, no doubt, satisfying some amount of curiosity). Freud claims that such an audience is impossible to accommodate. Such "an unauthorized listener who hit upon a chance one of them would as a rule form no useful impression; he would be in danger of not understanding what was passing between the analyst and the patient, or he would be bored."[114]

The wish for an audience signals a wish for a kind of certainty and stabilization of claim and evidence so as to deem these "authoritative." The

[114] "The Question of Lay Analysis," in SE 20, p. 185.

fantasy of an audience either of legal oversight or of third-party witness marks the extent to which western society has come to fetishize assertion as a guarantee of the truthfulness of a claim and the trustworthiness of its speaker.[115] In a legal setting, assertion and corroboration are the two kinds of speech privileged; the adversarial setting of the court is designed to test competing claims about events in the past and their consequences. Yet privileging assertion is possible only in certain rule-bound contexts with clear rules of discovery, evidence, and argumentative proceeding. We trust this setting to get, if not to "the truth of the matter," then at least to a truth that can be deemed to be legally consequential and binding. Similarly, third-party oversight allows us to corroborate claims, and, more powerfully, to serve as a witness to unjust suffering.[116]

Psychoanalysis provides a unique scene of encounter that refuses to indulge those two fantasies of authority and assertion. In their place, it encourages a different kind of truth-telling and trusting relationship, and teaches the practice of a different sort of ethical authority. With the juxtaposition of its indirection in speech against its highly structured format, psychoanalysis creates a space of structured uncertainty. Instead of relying on assertion and responsibility for the intention behind the claim or the consequences that follow, the combative collaboration of analysis permits a second-order reflection on the truth*fulness* of claims and their connection to other values – responsiveness, confidence, steadiness – that cannot be didactically taught or defended in any meaningful way. Instead, psychoanalysis provides a setting that enables participants to reflect on ethical environment – contoured by questions of timing, discretion, and motivation – rather than focusing narrowly on discrete acts of decision. Ethical authority comes from the framing of a shared, moral ecology, not from the regulation of individual responsibility. The authorship of such a context must be shared between analyst and patient in order for

[115] Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[116] The therapeutic and legal power of "witness" prompts Shoshana Felman to insist on psychoanalytic speech as "testimony." Her understanding of therapeutic action is a direct counter to the legal model. She explains that testimony speaks to "a contained and culturally channeled, institutionalized, *crisis of truth*. The trial both derives from and proceeds by, a crisis of evidence, which the verdict must resolve" (p. 6, emphasis in original). The assonance between legal and psychoanalytic testimony gives the claims of trauma survivors a powerful normative and political force. I would argue that this force, though, comes at the cost of insisting on closure and resolution – an insistence that only covers over the impossibility of a single authority to regulate conflicting evidence. Shoshana Felman, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992).

the patient to inhabit it fully. More than a cognitive appreciation for contingency, clinical practice creates an environment that cultivates those second-order ethical practices (e.g., courage, solidarity, generosity) that are expressed, rather than debated, in times of change.

I have turned to the psychoanalytic language of "intermediate" space so as to open up an intellectual space in which liberty and authority are not understood as only dichotomous. If "our history was left to us by no testament," then it falls to us moderns to ground the relationship between liberty and authority by engaging with this past. The intermediacy of psychoanalytic space has three significant effects on this project. First, it offers a space for self-cultivation not driven explicitly or implicitly by political program. Such "sacred" spaces are especially important for a modernity that turns to human community for a legitimating culture, rather than to external authorities (religion, custom, the family) and the communities that they sustain. As will be seen in the later chapters on Foucault and *parrhesia*, the ancient world had multiple sites in which ethical cultivation might be sought: different philosophic schools, the Orphic mysteries, the theater, other religious sects, to name a few. Freud pushes us to ask which modern sites beyond psychoanalysis might serve a similar function, a function all-the-more challenged by the scale of modern mass society. Second, and relatedly, absent a third-party perspective on analysis, patients are obliged to trust themselves precisely because there is no outside to which to turn. Even as the analyst is a mediating presence, her subjectivity is distorted by the patient's transference relationship and the expectation of social roles and dynamics that accompanies it. And third, the intermediacy of this space facilitates enactments – about which I will say more in the next chapter – whose transposition of past into future is more than a voluntarist indulgence or entirely the product of fantasy and imagination. The self-cultivation that results has the potential to be more deeply rooted than political posture. While it may not incline persons toward particular politics, it prepares them to face the uncertainties of political judgment, to question their reflexive responses, and to tolerate the discomforts of political contest.

Freud theorizes a *therapeutics* of the self, one designed to integrate (but only provisionally) a fundamentally disaggregative self. Such is one half of the response to the contradictions of modernity, that leaves individuals divided against themselves and constantly balancing pressures of integration against those of disaggregation. Holding on to the ambivalence of a not-quite-conscious speech-activity becomes important in ensuring that these resistances are not simply tamed or co-opted by

existing relations of power. Such is Foucault's concern with psychoanalysis. Despite Foucault's enthusiastic praise for *The Anti-Oedipus* as offering a "book of ethics" for those who struggle against the "technicians of desire," by the time of *History of Sexuality 1* Foucault later backs away from that position. He acknowledges that now "we are conscious of defying established power, our tone of voice shows that we know we are being subversive, and we ardently conjure away the present and appeal to the future, whose day will be hastened by the contribution we believe we are making. Something that smacks of revolt, of promised freedom, of the coming age of a different law … [s]ome of the ancient functions of prophecy are reactivated therein."[117] As the theory of repression has been more widely generalized – a spread Foucault attributes to Reich and not Freud – merely speaking out in the name of some kind of liberation is not enough. At the level of sexuality, even for Foucault the challenge is to develop a new interpretive means[118] with which to approach subject-formation, one that decouples truth-telling from the challenging of taboos.[119] And here my rereading of Freud recuperates an account of its therapeutics that does not participate in the progressivist liberation of persons from silence to speech. Instead, my turn to clinical practice sends us back to the "words and gestures, quietly authorized"[120] that compose the exchanges between doers and deeds.[121]

The structural dynamics of psychoanalysis, however, suggest that the work of ethical cultivation cannot be divorced from the intensity of its relations. Ethical cultivation is not an independent exercise. Insofar as Nietzsche haunts many agonistic accounts, the contrast between *Nacherziehung* and a Nietzschean "following after oneself" (in which ethical cultivation results from seeking out an exemplar) is significant.[122] Although Nietzsche hopes that the choice of an exemplar will facilitate self-development, he relies enormously on the suggestibility of his

[117] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 6–7.

[118] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1. Foucault consistently uses the language of interpretation in characterizing both the missteps of Reich and the interpretive matrix or grid (*grille*) needed to evaluate the present situation.

[119] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, p. 130.

[120] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, p. 4.

[121] Such a reading also explains Foucault's praise of Freud as an originator of discourse in "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" and "What is an Author?"

[122] James Conant offers a compelling reading of Nietzschean exemplarity in "Nietzsche's Perfectionism: A Reading of *Schopenhauer as Educator*," in *Nietzsche's Postmoralism: Nietzsche's Prelude to Philosophy's Future*, ed. Richard Schacht (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

audience. Nietzsche is forever vulnerable to skepticism that a reader could choose an exemplar who is sufficiently challenging of one's present self so as to provoke substantive change – the kind that enables a person to give birth to "a dancing star" – that is, to something so new as to appear utterly foreign to who one is presently. Hence it is important that the Freudian patient both chooses and does not choose his analyst. In admitting to feeling "sick" and seeking an analyst, the patient expresses his present sense of self-dislocation and an inchoate wish to be otherwise. He also chooses someone based on the reasonable belief that that person is qualified to help. The person the patient chooses, however, is not entirely identical to the person he encounters in the psychoanalytic session, as he transfers resistances honed from earlier conflicts onto the figure of the analyst. The pressure that Freud initially associates with the physical touch on the hysteric's forehead becomes the pressure of another person who stands in for perceived constraints on the patient's will. This self-extension becomes ethically significant when, unpredictably, the analyst is mistaken for someone she is not. Even as analysis unfolds between patient and analyst, there is always a partially engaged audience that is "off to the side."

That ethical cultivation rests on such unusual dynamics also suggests that psychoanalytic resistance cannot simply be "scaled up" for politics, but that it needs a different kind of adaptation. Freud moves us further along in this adaptation. He helps us to recognize that the tension between ethical cultivation and political engagement need not be the tired division of private and public. To the contrary: psychoanalysis enables us to articulate how cultural intermediaries – such as analysts, parents, educators, spiritual directors – come to have a formative effect and how this formation can be revised, undone, superseded. Freud further hints that these intermediaries enable us to develop those enactments that carry words and deeds from personal to public spaces. The experience of moving between social roles enables persons to understand how they come to develop concepts and criteria by which to regulate relationships and their claims to authority.

The next chapter will examine the authorial self emergent from these relationships of combative collaboration. At the bare minimum, such authorship begins in the ability to tolerate discomfort. Discomfort becomes a more supple experience – shared with another person, it becomes survival yet anguish, resisting yet burdened, hopeful yet haunting. It slowly transitions from the work of bearing the unspeakable, to the work of testing new responses and giving them weight. Gradually,

patients develop practices in uncertainty by which to modulate and guide their interpretive activities of weighing, testing, and judging. Beyond these practices, they acquire an experience of authorship and authority that contributes differently to their sense of agentic self. In contrast to models of agonistic politics, these partners in contest are not generic Others. Nor are these contests ones we could have with any and all compatriots. Psychoanalysis enables us to understand just *how* and *when* certain moments of personal history matter. Without stipulating collective ends, interactions with these intermediaries provide the interpretive housing that shelters those nascent transformations and narratives that comprise the work of critique. Even so, the work of self-transformation and the narration of its political implications ought not be collapsed. Rather, the tension between personal change and narration both binds past, present, and future and provides the space in which a specifically political authorization might be sought.

# 3

# Conversations with the Unknown

## The Psychic Perspective of Change

Where Chapter 2 argued that the "intermediate space" of psychoanalysis offers a transitional, quasi-social space, this chapter argues that such a space bears importantly on psychic change. Once again, the relationship to authority found in the psychoanalytic *Nacherziehung*, in both its epistemological and psychodynamic aspects, is central. "Such acknowledgement [of relationality]" notes Jessica Benjamin, "requires a different understanding both of … symbolic representation and of the intersubjectivity of the analytic situation, each understanding furthering the other."[1] If one backs away from a complete embrace of Freud's theory of drives – as Chapter 2 did explicitly, by instead emphasizing the relationships of the analytic encounter – then one can also loosen the reproductive grip of cultural structures. With a relational approach, persons become understood as molded through a series of seminal relationships from childhood onward, rather than the product of quasi-biological drives that gain shape and content through attachment to internalized norms. These relationships provide both the narrative form and the affective content for inhabiting the posture of critique. This chapter charts a progressive move deeper within these paradoxes of liberty and authority, of self-mastery and domination, and the claim that narratives of failure simply reinforce the terms of contradiction.

[1] Jessica Benjamin, "The Primal Leap of Psychoanalysis, From Body to Speech: Freud, Feminism, and the Vicissitudes of the Transference" in *Storms in Her Head*, ed. Muriel Dimen and Adrienne Harris (New York: Other Press, 2001), 53.

Some scholars, and most notably Judith Butler, have taken Freud's theorizing to account for the impediments to judgment rather than its cultivation. On their accounts, self-cultivation, much less judgment, is corrupted by the "circuits of Freudian conscience" or the "colonization of psychic space" to suggest that the instincts are effectively already co-opted.[2] To the extent that one's injuries constitute not just one's identity but also one's perspective on the world, persons become invested in the very reflexive structures of their subjection. Such arguments trade on the link binding the iterative power of the drives to the reproductive power of cultural structures. Alternately, a second group (writing in the perfectionist tradition of democratic theory) reads Freud alongside Wittgenstein to explore the captivation of individuals within a given psychic structure.[3] Foregrounding relations of cultural "grammar" rather than power, these thinkers find in Freud's *homo ludens* an ideal psychological complement to Wittgensteinian language games. Power relations notwithstanding, this tradition defines individuals by their capacity for creative play more than injury. If the first grouping emphasizes that self-constitution is overdetermined, the second suggests that a wily canniness enables persons to turn the critical interrogation of self-narration into an appreciation for raucous democratic contest. Both traditions invoke Freud to refashion the intellectual labor of critique into an ethics rooted in something other than moral code. And yet their readings of Freud lead to remarkably

[2] This grouping includes Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and *Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Kelly Oliver, *The Colonization of Psychic Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[3] This grouping includes Stanley Cavell, *Cities of Words* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2005); Shoshana Felman, *The Scandal of the Speaking Body*, 2nd edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Tracy Strong, "Psychoanalysis as a Vocation," *Political Theory* 12.1 (Feb. 1984): 51–79; and the methodology used by Linda Zerilli in *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). These two groupings are imperfect and in some ways artificial; bound by a common interest in Austin and performatives, Cavell and Butler contribute a foreword and an afterword to the 2nd edition of Felman's *Scandal of the Speaking Body*. My goal here is less to adjudicate between two putatively opposing "schools" than to call attention to the different potential for authorial agency in these readings of performatives. Cavell rightly notes that there can only be more or less felicitous speech-acts and that misfires (speech-acts gone awry) simply end up "doing" something different. Psychoanalytic enactments, by contrast, are motivated (even if indirectly) in a way that performatives are not; they are also conditioned by the psychoanalytic encounter rather than a broadly cultural understanding (*Verstehen*). As this chapter unfolds, I will argue that appeals to speech-acts and performatives tend to invoke and then gloss the discrepancy between imputed third-person authority and personal claim. Psychoanalytic practice gives a different attention to this discrepancy.

different prognoses for self-formation and agency, with no discernible ground for adhering to one over the other.

What if this impasse around self-formation results from our misunderstanding of trauma, and specifically the tendency to understand trauma as embedded in the recurrence of cultural structures? Following Freud, psychoanalysts work with a very different understanding of trauma. Rather than casting trauma as the violence of misrecognition, they understand trauma as the (temporary) inability to use metaphor.[4] Trauma freezes experiences in place, and prevents persons from linking experiences from different contexts together so as to articulate and work through these categorical similarities and their effects. Meaning becomes trapped in this now-past moment and unavailable for reflection or reworking. To the extent that experience is usually saturated with metaphoric associations, trauma not only marks the remains of injurious acts but also serves to contract one's experience of the world. When it takes the form of repeated misrecognition, one might see trauma as an instance of the overapplication of a norm. To counteract the effects of trauma requires the reestablishment of the association between one experience and another so as to coax them into expression. Such "metaphoric competence" enables persons to manage these kinds of equivalence once again – to both establish associations and recognize their limits – and so to infuse new meanings into daily experience. More radically, the emphasis on metaphoric association redirects attention to the authorial agency of subjects. At stake in thinking about trauma on these lines is the potential to make disruptions to experience generative, and to make the relation to a person or norm more than one of (mere) reproduction. The ability to define and direct equivalences, while also insisting on their limits, involves persons in the authorship of her own narratives; in such moments, one might say that a person claims her past rather than being claimed by it.

Already, Chapter 2 argued that metaphoric association lies at the heart of transference; its establishment relies on the patient's ability to experience that the analyst is *like* someone or something else, while the deepening of *Nachträglichkeit* comes from the exploration of those experiences

[4] Arnold Modell has developed this claim in *Other Times, Other Realities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) and *Imagination and the Meaningful Brain* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). See also Donnel Stern's *Partners in Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2010) and especially Chapter 6. Interestingly, Nietzsche works with a similar association of trauma and the deadening of metaphor in "On Truth and Lies in the Extramoral Sense," in *Philosophy and Truth*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press 1979).

"carried over" into the analytic encounter. Attention returns, then, to enactments as moments of "acting-out" a fragment of experience in a new context and so asserting a singularity of perspective that denies the possibility of any others. As Shoshana Felman notes, enactments evoke "pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference."[5] Felman, Butler, and others do *not* see the pliable potential of these same enactments. Yet, enactments make it possible to engage the meaning-laden exchange between the experiences of self-constitution – forever unstable and the ground for therapeutic action – and the refashioning of these through narrative. They are the event-space in which self-constitution and self-narration rub against one another and in which, potentially, their relation can be reworked. The activities of fantasy, play, and reality-testing counter both the apparent fixity of trauma and the mindless iteration of norm.

The result is a shift in authorial perspective away from an unstated third-person authority and toward that of participant–observers. Analytic practice adopts the perspective of someone trying to feel her way through political uncertainty. In opening traumatic experience up to expression, and by re-establishing the indirections that bind and differentiate self-constitution from self-narration, psychoanalysis seeks to extend authorial agency outward. It becomes possible to move from enactments to a more deliberate authorship and symbolic expression. In the sections that follow, I first acknowledge the hold of existing approaches to subject-formation. Releasing their thrall requires backing *out* of a theoretical context committed to drive theory and *into* an understanding of drives as primarily relational phenomena. It is less a discrete choice than a re-orientation that comes only from glimpsing the landscape that lies beyond our usual vantage points and its scope for authorial agency. I then turn to the fantasy and play that Freud associates with "reality-testing" to explore how these associational activities pull self-constitution apart from efforts at self-narration. The result is an understanding of fantasy and play as practices that redirect the psychic tensions provoked by the crisis of authority into a capacity for authorial agency. I thus find in psychoanalytic practice the ethical articulacy "we" moderns need – the ability to renovate those relations binding concrete and symbolic into an interpretive housing.

[5] Felman, *Testimony*, 5.

## Subjectivity and Narratives of Failure

Freud's struggle to capture the nature of psychic change and the development of individual subjects resonates with contemporary theory's own efforts to think through questions of subject-formation and agency. Although Judith Butler is perhaps the most well-known critic of agency, her account of the constraints on self-formation and the ensuing moralized narratives of failure is shared by other thinkers working in different critical traditions. Butler's *Psychic Life of Power* explores the iterative force of psychological drives and cultural structures. Radically divorcing subjectivity and agency, Butler disables the appeal to individual choice and responsibility. As a result, failure – in the form of normative deviance, repeated injury, or trauma – becomes the narrative frame for change, such that change itself becomes the work of repair in recuperation of an ideal. Even more perniciously, one becomes invested in these forms of subjectivation and mistakes them for the substance and structure of personal identity. Appealing to Freud for the exuberance, not the impossibility, of agency, Shoshana Felman offers a marvelously idiosyncratic reading of Austin against Freud that "studies speech itself as an acting-out or a passage into action"[6] and celebrates the flamboyance of flagrant failure. Impersonal norm and personal authority collide in the act of promising – and perversely, Felman finds in it the "scandal of the promising animal insofar as what he promises is precisely *the untenable*."[7] Like Butler, Felman draws attention to the gaps and failures that divide norm and action. She hyperbolizes, rather than laments, these failures and their potential for injury so as to make the fragility of moral existence a call to arms.

What, if not the assertion of a more certain normative framework, could ground ethical agency? Initially preoccupied with the epistemological dimension of failure, both thinkers shift attention to the effects of injury and *political* failures to redress it. Their appeal to embodied experience remains rather at odds with the intractability of their epistemological critiques, and the ensuing tension both enriches and troubles their account. So, Butler's earlier claims soften somewhat in *Giving an Account of Oneself,* when she shifts from an epistemological framing of the subject to an ontological one so as to regain the sense that *experience* of injury is constitutive. For Butler, exposure to the Levinasian face ought

[6] Felman, *Scandal,* 65.
[7] Felman, *Scandal*, 5. Emphasis in the original.

spur recognition of the shared precarity of existence and the unavoidable violence of self-assertion.[8] She writes that

> the full ambivalence of an unwanted address, is what constitutes our exposure to injury *and* our responsibility for the Other. This susceptibility is an ethical resource precisely because it establishes our vulnerability or exposure to what Levinas calls 'wounds and outrages.'[9]

Epistemological uncertainty becomes an existential precarity that lacks any way forward. Butler is clear that unfreedom lies at the heart of this address, that responsiveness is not a question of the will, and that a range of responses to this situation exists. Despite these allowances, those who fail to be ethically responsive to those who do injury fail to acknowledge something of their shared humanity. Problematically, Butler does not stipulate how individuals might settle these symbolic terms for themselves.[10] Responsiveness might be provoked by desire relentlessly in pursuit of an unattainable ideal (freedom, recognition, some version of a good life); it might be an ethical restlessness fueled by a dissatisfaction with the "wounds and outrages" that continue to inflect context.[11] It might be something like empathy to explain how persons move the concept of "injury" and "self" across different persons and symbolic domains.[12]

[8] This experience is constitutive of self: "From this primary experience of *having been given over from the start*, an "I" subsequently emerges." Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 91, 77.

[9] Butler, *Giving an Account*, 91.

[10] Kirsten Campbell challenges Butler's elusive framing of these relations alternately on terms of the Lacanian symbolic, the social, and culture. Campbell herself argues that feminists ought pay more heed to kinship relations and anthropologists' efforts to reconsider the determining effects of kinship and patriarchy. See "The Politics of Kinship," *Economy and Society* 31.4 (November 2002): 642–650.

[11] The example of relentless desire fits with Butler's Lacanian interests. The example of ethical restlessness is Jonathan Lear's reading of the tension between Aristotle's "*a* good life" (as one among many) versus "*the* good life" that seems ideal above all others. See Jonathan Lear, *Happiness, Death, and the Remainder of Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[12] Moya Lloyd turns to Butler's writings on Spinoza and the *conatus* (the desire for existence) that Butler says "remains at the core of my work" in *Undoing Gender* (Lloyd, 100). Lloyd writes that Butler also appears "to deploy it as an explanation for an ethics of responsibility towards the other. […] [She] places that idea beyond critique and outside of politics" (100, 101). Lloyd concludes that Butler's efforts to make the *conatus* "a more pliable notion of social being" both fail and are at odds with Butler's own efforts to analyze the discursive production of the desire in its various forms. Lloyd calls for greater interrogation of the historical practices that generate the social and give form to this desire to survive. "Towards a Cultural Politics of Vulnerability," in *Judith Butler's Precarious Politics*, ed. Terrell Carver and Samuel A. Chambers (London: Routledge, 2008).

Leaving these responses indeterminate, however, leaves them vulnerable to capture by existing moral and narrative frameworks. Change remains inflected with whatever unstated symbolic associations we bring to bear on what might "count" as injury or solace.[13] The narrative structure of failure becomes overwhelming. And so, against Butler's intentions, the effect is inadvertently to recast these interactions in terms of subjects and objects defined in reference to something external to themselves. The ability to deviate from this script, or to rewrite it, slips away.

Felman's embrace of the scandalous banality of the unkept promise addresses the problem of agency by illuminating the contact between personal and cultural authority. The unkept promise evokes modernity's own failed promise to make universal values into something that can be attained. It enacts the refusal to confront this impossibility, or "the performance of the *loss of ground*."[14] By insisting on the kept promise, we succumb to other strictures that organize our ethical lives: we succumb to the comfort of endings (rather than enduring the uncertainties of promises unfulfilled), to the affirmations of authority (as personal act cavorts in happy congruence with communal norm), and to the repose of continuity (rather than rupture). One could go on. Don Juan's seemingly quixotic behavior shows up the slippage between impersonal, third -person norms and their enactment by particular individuals. Scandal arises from the pleasure Don Juan personally takes in the unfolding, rather than the achievement, of normative acts. Surely Felman is right to recognize that, even in seemingly straightforward moral acts, there are elements "that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference."[15] And yet Felman leaves open the question of how to make this playfulness more than a promiscuous wandering of the boundary between promising and betrayal or the seduction of personal authority. For Felman, Don Juan's failure "pervades every performance, including even that… act of failing."[16] How might this unsteady admixture of play and fantasy be entrusted to something more than provocation? Might one outright break the "frame" of the self rather than merely toying with it?

[13] For example, to illustrate the point that responsibility emerges from situations of asymmetry and persecution, Judith Butler turns to the example of Job (as used by Jacques Laplanche). See *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 76.

[14] Felman, *Scandal*, 44. Emphasis in the original.

[15] Shoshana Felman, *Testimony* (New York: Routledge, 1991) 5.

[16] Felman, *Scandal*, 79.

Both Butler's and Felman's work inadvertently highlights a common problem: namely, that these accounts lack an appreciation for the viewpoint of psychic change. Bereft of any resources to bootstrap their way forward, the temptation for individuals is to lapse into a perspective structured by the narrative frame of failure. Differently from Butler's account, Felman's paradigmatic promise-breaker Don Juan demonstrates that "in the last analysis, the authority of the performative is nothing other than that of the first person."[17] Caught in the contradiction between needing an absolute faith in what are now ideals impossible to realize, the Butlerian individual can only labor on. Her world remains implicitly structured by faith even as it is now devoid of any possible fulfillment. Evoking the indeterminacy of ethics and context, neither Butler nor Felman manage to broach the impersonality of order and the singularity of vantage point. Even as both seek to focus on the *activity* of norm-engagement – Butler weaves violence and failure into the texture of lived experience, Felman hyperbolizes the interplay between norm and practice – the persistent rhetoric of failure belies an implicit, external vantage point. Change becomes cast primarily in terms of the work of repair, but the specifics of this work are opaque – they *must* be opaque given the uncertainties of context. Both accounts veer between the third-person authority of external norms and the personal authority of moving along. The possibility of a different viewpoint onto psychic change, let alone authorship, remains unrealized.

At this point it might be tempting to read Freud against Wittgenstein, so as to elaborate both this problem of perspective and the psychological dimension of change.[18] Interpreters of Wittgenstein have worked hard to develop his claim that "there are indeed [different philosophical] methods, just like there are different therapies," and that "the treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness."[19] Working to capture the

[17] Felman, *Scandal,* 33.

[18] Wittgenstein structures *Philosophic Investigations* so as to capture the personal experience of thought unfolding in social context; the text moves sensitively from a person's acculturation into linguistic community, through meditations on the processes of thinking, reading, and learning, and efforts to evaluate these.

[19] *PI*, §133. Occasionally this claim is abbreviated to the assertion that Wittgenstein's method of philosophy *is* a therapy. This claim diminishes debate over whether Wittgenstein's later remark "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness (*Krankheit*)" evokes psychoanalysis specifically or medical diagnosis more generally (§255). It also makes it harder to ask what would count as a therapy or as "therapeutic action." Jacques Bouveresse has examined Wittgenstein's own response to Freud – as alternately contemptuous and fascinated – and concludes that one can only confidently claim it to be ambivalent. Jacques Bouveresse, *Wittgenstein Reads Freud*, trans. Carol Cosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

perspective of change unfolding, James Tully and Aletta Norval turn to "aspect-dawning," or the ability to see an object differently even as the object itself remains unchanged.[20] Norval describes an example of such change – the subject who realizes "I am a democrat!"[21] – as "a process of identification – a picture gripping us, being occupied by something […] the embodied act of a subject passionately involved in an activity."[22] Such a reading of Freud and Wittgenstein alongside one another initially seduces: they share a preoccupation with language games, the insight that not all critical reflection is rooted in rationality and justification, an understanding that interpretation is context-driven in ways we cannot always see. To continue with this seduction, however, is to abandon the Freud of childhood sexuality, the Freud that binds truth-telling and "sexual enlightenment,"[23] and the Freud of the disruptive drives. At best, Freud's drives might be called upon to provide a mechanistic, external explanation for disruption (a function that admittedly they do provide). But the specifically sexual nature of these drives, their metaphoric associations, and their relational form become unnecessary. Although a Wittgensteinian framework brings questions of authorial perspective into clearer focus, it loses sight of the disruptive qualities of far-reaching change.

The nature and significance of authorial perspective now sharpens. Even though the Wittgensteinian approach rightly seeks to break the singularity of perspective, this tradition cannot challenge the core contradictions of self-formation; its conception of change remains on the surface of affective experience.[24] Resistance to dominant modes of seeing takes the

[20] James Tully, "The Agonic Freedom of Citizens," *Economy and Society*, 1999, 28.2: 161–82; Aletta Norval, "Democratic Identification: A Wittgensteinian Approach" in *Political Theory* 34.3 (April 2006): 229–255.

[21] Norval, "Democratic Identification," 241.

[22] Norval, "Democratic Identification," 241. Norval responds at length to the charge that aspect-dawning is intellectualist. The difficulty, however, in reading Wittgenstein on this point is that it is impossible to distinguish activities that provoke aspect-dawning from those that don't. To be fair, Wittgenstein seeks only to theorize the experience of change within language-games and not to adapt it to politics. Political theorists, however, might want greater insight into how to extend Wittgenstein's insights without succumbing to the "craving for generality" that would undo them.

[23] Freud, "The Sexual Enlightenment of Children: An Open Letter to Dr. M. Fürst," in SE 9.

[24] Norval extends this theoretical approach to post-apartheid South Africa. Her examples of change include "[c]hallenges to traditional forms of political participation, identifying with democrats marching through the streets of Prague, or sitting glued to the television, watching Mandela's release from prison" (249). She acknowledges that the extent of any "reinvigoration of local democratic processes depends, of course, on the dislocation of our current grammars" (250). After Tully's impressive theorization of the limits of critical

form of redirecting one's psychic response; the extent to which they can become threats to self is necessarily limited.[25] By contrast, the centrality of sexuality to the Freudian subject contributes to more than sexual identity. On Wittgensteinian terms, sexuality is the duck-rabbit that is the condition of our modern human existence; sexuality invokes an experience in which natural and cultural reproduction cannot be sundered because they together form the ground of symbolizing experience.[26] Gender and sexuality mark the creation of categories to try to regulate those instabilities and likenesses at the very heart of community; that Butler and Felman make similar points is reductively misattributed to the feminist dimension of their work. To speak of sexuality or the drives, then, becomes the effort to provide a narrative account of oneself that can only ever be approximate. "Sexuality" is not something to be directly perceived with its qualifying features descriptively listed; it is grasped only through its very expression. Sexuality thus becomes the site for those ambivalent sources of identity that escape beyond the reach of rationalization, justification, or moral community. Freud captures this indirection when he urges that "We must approach [it/id] with analogies: we call it [id] a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations."[27] This "chaos" is merely the negative imprint of an order we cannot quite grasp directly. Grasping this order and its effects on subject-formation would require re-creating those conditions under which sexualized tension of drives met with *logos* manifests in symbolizing speech. Differently from Wittgenstein, it *matters* deeply if the subject's love-object is a duck or a rabbit.[28] Losing sight of sexuality means losing

reflection, his political scenarios (rooted in commitments to egalitarianism, and diversity) veer peculiarly close to the politics of liberal tolerance he hopes to critique. Norval, "Democratic Identification"; James Tully, "The Agonic Freedom of Citizens."

[25] James Conant acknowledges this difficulty in the context of a Nietzschean "following after oneself" in his "Nietzsche's Perfectionism: A Reading of *Schopenhauer as Educator*" in *Nietzsche's Postmoralism: Nietzsche's Prelude to Philosophy's Future*, ed. Richard Schacht (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[26] Joan Wallach Scott find that psychoanalysis speaks to "the futile struggle to hold meaning in place that makes gender such an interesting historical object, one that includes not only regimes of truth about sex and sexuality but also fantasies and transgressions that refuse to be regulated." Joan Wallach Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 5.

[27] Freud, "The Dissection of the Psychic Personality" in *New Introductory Lectures*, SE 22, 73.

[28] Admittedly, this reading of Freudian sexuality has little to do with sex. In part, this is an artifact of Freud's own conception of *eros* as creation rather than eroticism. It is also an artifact of Freud's own confused efforts to theorize sexuality, efforts that notoriously are dependent on a heterosexual model of sexuality. One might speculate that Freud's own thinking reaches its limits before the cultural mores of his day, and that even as he

sight of the ambivalence – fueled by love, aggression, and resulting guilt – of uncertain identities and judgment, along with the formative stubbornness of their denial (what Freud calls "reaction-formation" in *Civilization and its Discontents*).[29]

Shorn of this context for affective experience, resistance tilts toward the cognitive and intellectualist.[30] Linda Zerilli perhaps comes closest to an incorporation of affect into an agentic subject-formation in her use of Wittgenstein. Critical of the lingering intellectualism in Butler's critique that encourages persons to "stand outside our form of life and judge it to be arbitrary,"[31] Zerilli turns to practices of collective figuration as "a radical creation *in* the ordinary."[32] Her exemplar, Monique Wittig, seeks "not to demonstrate … but to lead before the eyes (with images and metaphors)" by offering novel combinations of human relationships. Although I share Zerilli's aversion to the language of "failure," her images of feminine collectivity recovered from Wittig do not seem to go far enough. Zerilli argues that the rhetorical logic of images and

recognizes that sexuality is not an expression of pure nature, he was unable to think past the presumption that heterosexuality was a baseline model for sexual identity. Education, then, emerges more clearly as another site in which this line between nature and culture (as well as jurisdiction over it) blurs, and so might be ideal to undoing what was inadvertently "learned" in other contexts. For a thoughtful reflection of Freud's contradictions regarding sexuality, see Teresa de Lauretis, "Desire and Narrative," in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1984); and the first chapter in Tim Dean's *Beyond Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and his volume edited with Christopher Lane, *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[29] Guilt is not conditional upon action; whether one restrains or acts on one's aggression does not alter the experience of guilt. Freud explains that "… the sense of guilt is an expression of the conflict due to ambivalence, of the external struggle between Eros and the instinct and the instinct of destruction, or death. This conflict is set going as soon as men are faced with the task of living together." See *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1961), 95.

[30] In *Philosophic Investigations*, Wittgenstein works strenuously against a purely rational approach to language-games. The appeals to social context and the thick descriptions of "forms of life" and sensation all emphasize that language is something rooted in practice and lived experience. The psychology that sustains these practices lies beyond the scope of his work. Rather like Foucault in his late work, Wittgenstein relies enormously on child-like curiosity and its operations in contexts of more, less, or different guidance to stand in for affect and embodiment.

[31] Zerilli first argues that such an external perspective does not exist – one can never step out of a 'form of life' – and second, that Butler ultimately relies on a philosophic skepticism in order to make this distinction between the truth or lie of gender. In moving this epistemological critique into a critique of political structures, Butler thus confuses failures of epistemic criteria with failures of community. Zerilli, Feminism, 49.

[32] Zerilli, *Feminism*, 90. Emphasis added.

metaphors also creates a universal, only it will be a "'fantastic universal,' not [one] logically deduced."[33] For this claim to hold true, however, Zerilli must explain when and how such a fantastic universal comes to be personally salient, and to theorize rather than assert the conditions under which such salience is experienced rather than cognitively understood. Although Zerilli counters that these images, and the relationships they embody are "discovered in the practice of daily life," the terms of those relationships and that discovery remain unclear.[34]

Each of these ways of interpreting Freudian theory fits well with a common way of understanding psychoanalysis as dominated by the drives. These approaches offer some amount of analytic traction: they explain an affective investment in cultural structures that are not easily dislodged through intellectual argument and that go against the grain of self-interest, and so offer a psychological motivation for a self-formation that otherwise seems perverse. Freud's declarative writing style reinforces this impression and, to some extent, camouflages his extraordinary willingness to revise his theoretical framework in the face of clinical practice. As a result, it is easy to forget that over the course of his writings, Freud variously defines the "instincts" (*Instinkte*) and "drives" (*Triebe*);[35] he comes quite late to a theory of aggression and the death drive (in 1922); and he offers competing accounts of psychological development (culminating in the familiar, if badly named, topographical model of 1936).[36] These accounts range across: the primitive actions of instincts, the dyadic interactions first experienced between mother and child, the sexual development of children, and the triangular relationships of competition and loss that compose the oedipal complex. Even in work subsequent to Freud, psychoanalysts

[33] Zerilli, *Feminism*, 90–1.

[34] In accounts that build on Wittgenstein and Arendt both, the appeal is generally to imagination out of recognition that critical reflection can't upset those practices most settled. The stumbling point, then, is thinking about how to move from imagination to "beginning anew." Zerilli finesses this point by appealing to various kinds of "relations": relations to others, to the past, to a symbolic imaginary. On this point, I argue that the psychoanalytic relationship offers an actual containing space composed of relationships of resistance and transference; that the relationship is specific, personal, and affectively laden; that relapses and advances both can be tolerated without appeal to categories such as "progress" or "failure"; and anything "new" is born into a social, rather than an idiosyncratic, world.

[35] See "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" in SE 12; see *Outline of Psychoanalysis* for an integrated synopsis of his psychological model.

[36] I say "badly named" because this terminology wrongly implies that Freud's model is one of successively deeper layers. It obscures Freud's claim that not just the id, but also parts of the ego, and super-ego are unconscious, and contributes to the perception that the id is somehow more fundamental than the other parts of the psychic personality.

disagree on which account is to be considered primary or final, and how to weigh the effect of culture in considering, for example, dyadic relations more strongly than the oedipal complex.[37] Although Butler and Felman helpfully show up the limits placed on agency by constraining structures, the slowness of these structures to change makes these theories limited in developing affirmative accounts of self-formation and politics – a point that Butler has more recently acknowledged.[38] Yet theorists have been reluctant to move beyond these drives in part because they explain the diffusion of cultural archetypes among particular individuals, and because they square the epistemological uncertainties of modernity with the apparent implacability of cultural and ethical code.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that Freud himself was uneasy with this final terminus, and that we ought to rethink our analytic reliance on drives, and, relatedly, that we should explore and extend the reach of psychoanalytic enactments. After all, Freud notes that few of his patients present the archetypical symptoms of hysteria, neurosis, or other disorders, and this clinical dissatisfaction prompts revisions to his model of mind as late as 1936. The common feature that Freud strives to capture across his psychological models is interruption; the emphasis is continually on what Freud terms the "psychological economy" that unevenly circulates energy and desires between id, ego and super-ego.[39] Freud's final theory comes to emphasize the ego, more than the id or the unconscious.[40] At the mercy of constant demands from its three "tyrannical masters,"[41] the ego's constant negotiations, along with the energy inherent to the drives, create an individual subjectivity characterized by "mental restlessness."[42] Change becomes less rarified – it is simply the

[37] For more on the distorted readings of psychoanalysis in contemporary theory, see "Introduction" in Jessica Benjamin's *Like Subjects, Love Objects* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[38] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 195.

[39] Freud takes *das Es* from Georg Groddeck, "who is never tired of insisting that what we call our ego behaves essentially passively in life, and that, as he expresses it, we are 'lived' by unknown and uncontrollable forces." The footnote explains: "Groddeck himself no doubt followed the example of Nietzsche, who habitually used this grammatical term for whatever in our nature is impersonal and, so to speak, subject to natural law." See "Ego and the Id," SE 19, 23, p.23, fns 2,3.

[40] For more on this gradual shift in emphasis, see Marcia Cavell, *The Psychoanalytic Mind: From Freud to Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[41] Freud, "The Dissection of the Psychic Personality," in *New Introductory Lectures*, SE 22, 77.

[42] I borrow this felicitous phrasing from Jonathan Lear's *Open-Minded: Working out the Logic of the Soul* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998).

mind disrupting itself. The challenge is less to field marshal an intractable conflict between drives and cultural norms than to seize, expand, and direct this restlessness into something that is world-expanding. This work redirects attention to the practical interventions of clinical practice – specifically, the activities of play, fantasy, and reality-testing that Freud used in order to explore and dislodge particular psychic structures. But for all that Freud likened clinical practice to the arts (primarily to distinguish it from the "cold science" of surgery), he also called attention to the difficulties of authorial perspective. Quite differently from the creative writer who "sits inside [the protagonist's] mind, as it were, and looks at the other characters from outside,"[43] the patient and analyst both lack such a vantage point. Indeed, subsequent analysts have developed Freud's initial insights into the concept of 'enactments' to insist on the unique vantage point of the encounter itself.

Clinicians and theorists alike came to experience the over-attention to the drives as a limitation on the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis. Historically, interest in enactments grew as psychoanalysts reflected on Freud's contradictory analogies of analytic authority and enigmatic comments on writerly perspective. Even classical analysts, in different ways, realized that the "evenly suspended attention" or "analytic neutrality" that Freud sometimes urged in analysis were clinically impossible and ultimately hurtful, and instead have come to consider the mutual influence of both participants.[44] To theorize these interactions, relational psychoanalysts[45] and others instead returned to Freud's language of constructions and acting-out to make the impossibility of impartial authority generative rather than debilitating. Hans Loewald (1970) was one of the first classical analysts to modify the understanding of the drives and to understand them as "relational phenomena"; he was also one of the first to emphasize

[43] Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," in SE 9, 150.

[44] Certain contemporary analysts, such as Donald Spence and Roy Schafer, continue to work with these conceptions of analytic impartiality to develop their account of psychoanalytic hermeneutics. Roy Schafer and Judith Chused work with an interactive analyst/patient model but understand enactments as initiated by the patient. Others, such as Jessica Benjamin, Jonathan Lear, Stephen Mitchell, Jay Greenberg, Lewis Aron, and Otto Renik, have discarded these metaphors as unrealistic and harmful, and understand enactments as initiating with both participants. For more on the history and implications of these distinctions, see Otto Renik, "The Perils of Neutrality," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 63 (1994): 495–517; Lewis Aron, "Enactment, Interaction, and Projective Identification: The Interpersonalization of Psychoanalysis," in *A Meeting of Minds* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1996), 189–220.

[45] For more information on the relational school of psychoanalysis, see the earlier discussion in Chapter 2.

the analyst's participation in the encounter. Recasting resistance as a positive force, Theodore Jacobs (1986) coins the term 'enactment' to conceptualize how patient and analyst act upon one another, and to distinguish this influence from the pejorative overtones to "acting-out." Broadly, enactments are the verbal and non-verbal expression of some aspect of personal identity or experience that is unavailable for reflection such as, on Jonathan Lear's reading, the Rat Man's fearful cringe before Freud.[46] Enactments are powerful moments in the analytic encounter. While the activities of acting-out and repetition position analysts as observers, with enactments analysts are drawn into participation with the patient and are invited to respond in a specific way. These invitations convey something about the patient's expectations, are usually provoked by an intolerable thought, and are efforts either to invite the analyst to offer corroborating evidence or to project the intolerable onto the analyst. James McLaughlin (1991) emphasizes that the creative agency of enactments likewise allows the analyst to return to his own "transference ghosts of the past [that] are never entirely laid to rest" and so to any "slip and shortfall, to rework these closely through the eyes of the patient."[47] If enactments are "actions imitating actions" – to liken them to Aristotle's definition of tragedy – then they carry with them not just the mimicry of an earlier moment, but also traces of subsequent, unwitting efforts to respond to that moment (be that response the denial of repudiation or the curiosity of working-through). So for Lewis Aron (2003), enactments are "a central means by which patients and analysts enter into each other's inner worlds and discover themselves as participants within each other's psychic life, mutually constructing the relational matrix that constitutes the medium of psychoanalysis."[48] No deliberative panacea, enactments offer a means to engage

[46] Jonathan Lear, *Happiness*, 121–5.

[47] James McLaughlin, "Clinical and Theoretical Aspects of Enactment," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 39 (1991): 595–614, 612.

[48] Lewis Aron, "The Paradoxical Place of Enactment in Psychoanalysis," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13.5 (2003): 623–31. Acting-out, repetitions, and enactments are all means for patients to communicate unconscious material without having to verbalize it directly. In moments of acting-out and repetition, analysts are generally positioned as observers. In the case of enactments, analysts are drawn into participation with the patient and are invited to respond in a specific way. These invitations convey something about the patient's expectations and are efforts to provoke corroborating evidence. The concept of enactment was first developed by Theodore Jacobs in "On countertransference enactments," *Journal of the Psychoanalytic Association*, 34: 289–307. See also Steven J. Ellman, "Analytic Trust and Transference: Love, Healing Ruptures and Facilitating Repairs," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 27, no. 3 (2007): 246–63; Judith Chused, "The Role of Enactments," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13, no. 5 (2003): 677–87; Judith Chused, "The

those "warded-off [mental] contents" that are most threatening and intolerable – "whoever I am, this is not-me" – at the point where this material becomes externalized into interpersonal interaction.

Two aspects of the relational approach to subject-formation are critical to understanding the conditions under which an authorial agency can be cultivated. First, the conceptual vocabulary of enactments – and their differentiation into the related experiences of recollection, narration, play, and fantasy[49] – makes it possible to disentangle the therapeutic work of engaging deep-rooted investments from the critical work of conscious interpretation. The result is not a reconstitution of self as such, but instead a set of practices by which to pull apart the processes of self-constitution and self-narration, and to manage the resulting discomfort and threat. That is, psychoanalytic practice seeks to disentangle the terms on which one describes oneself to another from those on which one might be formed, to separate the terms of account-giving from those of composition, if only provisionally. Second, Freud's competing developmental accounts thus become not a problem of inconsistency or weak empirical validity, but attest to the ability of the past to give rise to multiple futures. They also evoke the competing scientific, literary, and historical domains of authority, and the need for both analyst and patient to exercise interpretive discretion when moving onward in conditions of uncertainty.[50] To insist on the scientific validity or the perfect compatibility of these frameworks would be to lapse into the same demands for accuracy examined in the previous chapter, demands ill-suited for the psychoanalytic context.

Evocative Power of Enactments," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 39 (1991): 615–39; Anthony Bass, "'E' Enactments in Psychoanalysis: Another Medium, Another Message," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13, no. 5 (2003): 657–75; Jay Greenberg, "Psychoanalytic Words and Psychoanalytic Acts: A Brief History," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 32 (1996): 195–213; Otto Renik, "Reactions to 'Observing-Participation, Mutual Enactment, and the New Classical Models,' by Irwin Hirsch," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 33 (1997): 279–84.

[49] 'Recollection' generally indicates the recovery of memory in the past; it can be distinguished from the less wholly conscious 'reminiscence.' 'Narration' is the formulation of a story about oneself structured with a clear beginning and end; some narrations can take the form of enactments in that the telling of the story presents a larger piece of psychic structure than that contained in the words spoken.

[50] Psychoanalyst Michael Eigen captures the knottiness of this situation when he writes, "The Freudian baby and the Winnicottian baby are not identical. This doubleness points to the fact that no human baby is one baby. We do not know what to do with this multiplicity, but we are not free to evade it." Cited in Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, 6. One might also liken these multiple developmental accounts to Nietzsche's parables of morality in *The Genealogy of Morals* that suggest the possibility for different modes of ethics.

Instead, the psychoanalytic conception of enactments might offer a way to recover this tension, to engage it critically, and so to increase individuals' authorial capacity over and against broader cultural structures.

Understood thusly, psychoanalysis would contribute to debates in contemporary political theory around self-formation in a surprising way. The paradox binding liberty and authority in psychoanalysis, as well as the epistemological tension evinced by the competing genres of science and literature, suggests neither that we advocate liberation or authoritative rule, nor that we adjudicate whether psychoanalysis is a science or a literary hermeneutics. Instead, the ethical force of psychoanalysis, along with its potential for authorial agency, lies in the confrontation with authority that is also a working-through. To avow that the only way forward is to muddle along or to cultivate a cynical skepticism is not to display a world-weary maturity. Instead it is to concede to a singular reading of Freud as a failed innovator with foreshortened horizons, such that the "safest and most discrete of spaces, between the couch and discourse" becomes a place "to contain everything, with no fear of 'overflow.'"[51] On this reading, discursive words of self-narration and psycho-social processes of self-constitution collapse into the same dynamic. It does not detract from the power of Foucault's account to realize that clinical practice and cultural context both have shifted, and that the psychological conditions of the knowing subject might disrupt its reproduction. A continued re-affirmation of this paradox, without engaging the disciplinary innovations that might unsettle it, would be to remain caught in a paralysis that oscillates between interpretive posture and political or ethical practice. Such an interpretive redirection cannot be undertaken lightly. The next section will argue that backing out of an interpretive fidelity to drive theory affords the opportunity for a re-orientation that will open up new possibilities for authorial agency. Instead, enactments serve as the grist for developing those "metaphoric competences" that permit individuals to cultivate authorial agency.

## Metaphoric Competence and Self-Writing

What ground is there to argue, as I intend to do, that the dynamics of this intermediate space are different, such that this marriage of desire and discourse can be sundered? How might we now identify those conditions under which self-constitution and self-narration could be pulled apart, so

[51] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality 1*, 5.

as to open up the possibility for subjects to change themselves? In answer to this question, I argue two points. First, that we need to consider that Freud's account of psychic dynamics is one of an excess that goes beyond the pulsions of desire – indeed, it tells a story of interpretive surfeit rather than a story of lack or deviancy. And, second, that the loop that binds desire to discourse is not nearly so uninterrupted as contemporary theorists such as Foucault and Judith Butler would have us think. Not only do the activities of what Freud terms "play" and "reality-testing" implicitly challenge an understanding of internalization as dominated by repression, these activities also challenge and open up what Butler calls our "passionate attachment to subjection."[52] If for Butler this attachment forms the reflexive structure of subjection, then this reflexive structure must be fundamentally disrupted in order for self-cultivation to take a new direction. While the moniker "reality-testing" (*Realitätsprüfung*)[53] risks connoting ideological demystification, Freud designates those exercises by which one re-establishes communication between fantasy and actuality, between what is sought and what is.[54]

Toward thinking through the effect of reality-testing and play on self-cultivation, I want to start where Freud ends and work my way backward. By the end of his career, Freud has settled on the death drive as the explanation for why humans are driven to repeat – to repeat thoughts, actions, dreams – even when these are traumatic or painful. Freud slowly reaches this conclusion to explain why an organism driven to reproduce biologically might yet hold onto painful memories. Freud reaches this conclusion in part because of the theoretical expectations that frame his inquiry: namely, that there must be something other than the pleasure and reality principles that could explain destructive behavior, and that human change tends toward positive development.[55] These pre-conceptions were

[52] Judith Butler, *Psychic Life*, 79ff.

[53] See "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," in SE 12, as well as "A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams" in SE 14. The sense of testing connoted by "*prüfung*" works against the tendency to view Freudian analysis as one that seeks to uncover something more "fundamental" within individuals. The testing here is of one internally generated psychological *response* against a perception of external reality, rather than an attempt to get to the root of the response. It is an exercise in testing one's skills rather than in knowing oneself.

[54] So reality-testing is abandoned in dreams; one might choose to suspend it to some degree when reading novels or watching a play; and it is an exercise not continually operative in daily life.

[55] Freud first uses the term "reality principle" in "Two Principles of Mental Functioning," SE 12, 213–226. He elaborates the relationship between the reality and pleasure principles in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990).

not at all unusual for the nineteenth century. Goethe, whom Freud quotes extensively, develops the notion of striving (*streben*) as an activity that causes a "war between two wills to rage within man's breast" and turns to the figure of Mephistopheles as he "who forever wills evil and forever works good." Similarly, German Romantics have romanticized different interplays between the sublime and the beautiful, or the natural and the artificial, to capture these tensions that resolve in favor of human flourishing. Read against his nineteenth century counterparts, Freud's theorization of two competing drives, that (when healthy) nonetheless fuel progressive development, is unsurprising.

More recently, however, Jessica Benjamin and Jonathan Lear (themselves both philosophers and psychoanalysts) have raised the question of what happens to Freud's model of the mind when we *don't* accept this implicitly teleological framework.[56] That is, what happens when change no longer can be understood either as the release of psychic tensions through discharge, or as an epic struggle between creation and destruction? To get to this framework, Freud had to assume that the compulsion to repeat that constitutes the death drive is simply a fact of a primally aggressive human nature. However helpful that association is at defining the limits of progressive politics, Benjamin argues that it obviates the need for humans to learn to set those limits for themselves. Backing away from that assumption entails backing *into* a framework in which psychic change has no pre-determined direction, tendency, or content. It means letting go of the formal tendency to think of modern subjectivity in terms of deviance, lack, or a structurally formed alienation. Change becomes simply the mind disrupting itself, and the accompanying psychic aftermath of that disruption. Lear explains that repeated over time these "are the mind's attempts, at varying levels of failure and success, to inform this breakthrough with meaning."[57] Lear argues that although some changes might be willed, in line with the dictates of neurosis as much as virtue, not all changes are – nor ought they be understood as either the cunning of reason or the canny of the unconscious working its way to the surface of events. Those other examples oblige us to conceive of the mind as a relatively closed system, one in which the psychic response to disruption leaves very little "remainder." When read against Freud's methods as practiced, such a belief very quickly breaks down. After all, Freud intuitively

[56] Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects*; Jonathan Lear, *Happiness, Death, and the Remainder of Life*.

[57] Jonathan Lear, *Happiness,* 109.

begins with psychic excess as a way to theorize mindedness, and it is his theorization of slips of the tongue, dreams, neurosis, and psychosis that enables him to speculate about "general" workings of the mind. To hold onto the belief that nothing is ever "left out," we could expand our notion of these cycles of disruption and response over time, and argue that the effects of certain traumas, wishes, and fantasies are often displaced in time and content. But we are left with no good explanation for those traumas, wishes, and fantasies that do not provoke later recollections, disruptions, or slips of the tongue. One could only say, descriptively, that those psychic events must not have been meaningful.

That answer points the way towards re-formulating an understanding of psychic disruption. It suggests that those disruptions are consequential for psychic transformation, that somehow become bound up in a broader process of "meaning-making." Something about the *process* of transforming mere disruption into a meaningful event is key toward understanding when transformation might be associated with either psychic development or lingering trauma. Even Felman allows that "the act of failing opens up the space … of impossible reality, not because something is missing, but because something else's done, or because something else is said […] the enactment of a difference."[58] Change neither is the recuperation of an ethical ideal nor over-determined by context. Freed from its placement within teleology, both the process of change and the nature of what I've been calling a psychic "remainder" have the potential to become much more radical.

With a different eye toward psychic disruption, Freud can now be seen to characterize modern individuals not so much as ill but as overwhelmed by a singular feature of modern life: surfeit. From Freud's first "dream-book" to his *Introductory Lectures*, he broadens the terrain of these conditions of excess: they become a surfeit of energies, a surfeit of meaning unintelligible to the broader culture, a surfeit that betrays a mental restlessness lacking a framework to give it form or meaning.[59] More radically, it suggests that the psyche *always* exceeds its mode of being made subject, and hints at the presence of resources (affective and cognitive both) beyond the reach of power. Even as psychodynamics aim toward a kind of equilibrium, this equilibrium is constantly being upset and re-established. Something – that psychic remainder – is always left out. Or, more accurately, this remainder resists meaning-making. Even

[58] Felman, *Scandal*, 57.
[59] Jonathan Lear, *Happiness*, 111.

as we put together a narrative that is "coherent enough," we cover over the disjunctures, the dead-ends, and the inconsistencies of this account. The surfeit exceeds the bounds of intelligibility. That modern subjectivity should have these qualities matters for how Freud comes to understand both the dynamics and the goals of psychoanalysis. Rather than trying to regulate a categorical distinction of illness or health, deviancy or normalcy, the reality-testing practiced in psychoanalysis instead seeks to help patients recognize and regulate this meaning-laden surfeit. Self-regulation here aims not at quiescence but at creation; it recognizes that surfeit is not an excess to be dispelled but an excess whose discharge, when released from the repetitious structures of neurosis, might be generative. Although initially experienced as disabling, illness might contain within itself the possibility for creation.

As a result, self-transformation would seem to require an ability to grapple with this surfeit that escapes beyond earlier efforts at organization and classification. Adopting the viewpoint of change particularly emphasizes its indeterminacy. Surfeit troubles the placid surface of the mind by challenging the organizing power of its governing principles; change is what lies beyond the horizon of one's usual conscious and unconscious world. Freud describes how fantasies "fit themselves in to the subject's shifting impressions of life, change with every change in his situation."[60] In comparison with the democratic theories invoked earlier, such self-development is not an ignorance to be filled, a perspectival captivation to be dispelled, or a vulnerability to be strengthened. Rather than automatically equating thought with skepticism or critique – in which competing explanations are judiciously weighed against one another – psychoanalytic practice embarks on teaching individuals to become "conversant with the unknown."[61] These practices linger on what is generally passed over, over-looked, or seen darkly through the prism of neurosis. The unknown is what escapes beyond the usual interpretive frame of a life.

Although it might be tempting to read such conversations as tolerant attempts to mediate internal and external worlds, or to graduate to

[60] Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," in SE 9, 147.

[61] The phrase is idiosyncratic to Freud – and a puzzle to his translator, James Strachey, who notes that the first German edition read "nun bekannten Widerstand" and was corrected to "unbekannten Widerstand." Strachey comments that this "seems to make less good sense: 'to become more conversant with the resistance that is unknown to him.'" Strachey alters his translation – and the sense of the process of working-through – by rather cumbersomely translating the phrase as "One must allow the patient time to become more conversant with this resistance with which he has now become acquainted." See "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" in SE 12, 155, n1.

a more eloquent self-awareness, this activity relies on far less stability of interpretive convention.[62] From the perspective of the patient, the only clue to any "way forward" is a diffuse discomfort. Freud postulates that "when the child has grown up and has ceased to play, and after he has been labouring [sic] for decades to envisage the realities of life with proper seriousness, he may one day find himself in a mental situation which once more undoes the contrast between play and reality."[63] He emphasizes that the play of fantasy is not experienced as such; fantasies emerge in those enactments when persons unconsciously act out bits of the past or the hoped-for future in the present. To call these 'rationalizations' is to make these mental blindspots overly deceptive and evasive; it suggests that ignorance or moral weakness are to blame. Instead, quite literally a world does not exist in which the patient can see past this elision. There is no obvious distortion to mark its existence. Again, psychoanalysis's structural conditions – rather than being an appeal to strong character, reflective insight, or creative imagination – prove key. The special context of analysis that is the intermediate space organized through transference offers "a transitional state between mere inner fantasy and actuality."[64] If fantasy "hovers between past, present, and future on the thread of a wish,"[65] then fantasy is not something unreal; it is something we are trying desperately to actualize, to test, and to give a reality. Fantasy becomes an effort to communicate a wish and its reinterpretation over time through successive moments of psychic development. Spurred by the dynamics of analysis, enactments perform both the original wish as well as failed attempts to respond to it. Analysis (and attention to enactments) enables the re-establishment of communication with those wishes that haunt our practices. Fantasy comes to signal a need for articulacy between material and ideal practices, rather than imaginative discovery or an aesthetic appreciation for pluralism. Enactments thus spur more than the re-establishment of communication with those wishes that haunt our practices. The haunting is the clue that our practices, though still unwitting mediations between thought and action, are stressed and beginning to fail.

[62] And so my account of these "conversations with the unknown" differs markedly from the loosely Freudian "social description" envisioned by Richard Rorty in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[63] Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," SE 9, 147.

[64] Hans Loewald, "Psychoanalysis As an Art and the Fantasy Character of the Psychoanalytic Situation," in *Papers in Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 369.

[65] Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," SE 9, 148.

Although Freud comes to call the process "reality-testing," as he hazards these ideas and new vocabulary, the analogies to which he consistently returns to develop this concept are those of childish play and creative writing. These comparisons "to the play of children" that "lends that piece [of reality] a special importance and a secret meaning"[66] make such conversations less "dialogues" or "communicative exchanges" than experiences of experimentation. The comparisons of fantasy to play and creative writing also suggest something of the method Freud invokes for generating and working-through enactments: that of metaphor and analogy. With enactments, psychic phenomena are drawn out into a quasi-social space and are given a new and imperfect context. Hans Loewald explains, "The specific impact of a play depends on its being experienced both as actuality and as a fantasy creation."[67] Psychoanalytic play does not automatically privilege the critical viewpoint of the analyst; rather, "patient and analyst in a sense are co-authors of the play."[68] For a moment, that hovering quality of fantasy traces the unstable border between the familiar and the uncanny, or the moment of naturalization and denaturalization. Such a suspended moment lasts until, for example, the mirroring activities and interpretations performed by the psychoanalyst prompt the immediacy of the transference to recede and "its character as a fantasy creation stands out in bolder relief."[69] That extension of psychic structure into social space enables patients to become aware of the co-presence of fantasy and actuality, to experience them in a manner not purely cognitive, and to learn to manipulate that juxtaposition for themselves. Sharing in the experience, both patient and analyst are called upon to "author" an emergent understanding of the context.

Psychoanalytic practices allow us to see, then, how we might come to leverage the activity of self-narration against the presumed fact of our self-constitution. As noted earlier, built into Freud's subject are *two* developmental narratives. Freud situates individual development from infancy to adulthood as the mastery of both physical and *interpretive* desire – an ability first to manage sexual impulses and desires,[70] then to establish boundaries between oneself and others,[71] and finally to engage in the

[66] Freud, "Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis," in SE 19, 187.
[67] Loewald, 355.
[68] Loewald, 355.
[69] Loewald, 355.
[70] Specifically, this outline proceeds theoretically from the oral phase to the sadistic-anal, the phallic, and finally the genital phase; in practice, these phases may overlap or be somehow inhibited. See *Outline for Psychoanalysis*, in SE 23, 152–56.
[71] See "Negation" in SE 19, 235ff.

finer work of interpretation. Long after the stage of constitutional development,[72] mastery of interpretive desire requires an ability to make desire articulate and intelligible even as the period of latency makes any definitive knowledge of one's "beginnings" impossible. Moving between the moments of self-constitution and self-narration entails revisiting those authorial processes of discovery and production at the moment when they blur. That moment is the moment when mystification and demystification, naturalization and denaturalization, exist in a fragile co-existence. Even as the psychoanalytic context is a space of containment and security, it does not over-write the ending of the clinical process; its activities aim to intervene in the framing of a life. Being students rather than dependent children means that patients (and moderns, generally) have the capacity to be responsive to, if not quite in control of, our ignorance. It suggests we have an ability to dispose of ourselves.

Metaphor is crucial to understanding how authorship might retool the iterative power of culture. Applying similar techniques to the auto-analysis of his dreams, to his attention to slips of the tongues, and to his clinical practice, Freud comes to argue that these all draw on the same working-through (*Durcharbeit*) present in everyday living.[73] Between fantasy and reality – whether in childhood dreams, the analytic encounter, or in waking life – lies the authoring work of interpretation and expression. If the defining interpretive transformation in childhood is the self-differentiating move from wanting to *be* someone to wanting to be *like* someone, then the defining transformation for adults is learning how to express in one's own actions, and to read in others', these same metaphoric equivalences.[74] It entails recognizing that these equivalences are *metaphoric*, and so imperfectly analogous and coherent. Metaphors generate insight by drawing on one set of relationships and transposing them to another domain; the surprising insertion of previous knowledge into a new setting enables a learning that reflects new, transformative understanding rather than simply the acquisition of more information. I would argue that the interpretive indirection of metaphor and analogy – of moving claims and actions between contexts – is the medium for

[72] Of course, the physical development of this constituted self is fixed only provisionally. Although Freud, like contemporary scientists, divides childhood development into successive stages, our understanding of these stages and the fixity of their effects remains speculative. We may act "as-if" these stages conclude, but these conclusions are constantly being revised or upset by new research.

[73] For a summary comparison of these two, see *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, SE 23.

[74] Such are the characteristics of "mature object-relations," for example. See Hans Loewald, "Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis," in *Papers*, 230.

becoming "conversant with the unknown" rather than condemning our desires to the mute idiocy of repetitious drives. By cultivating "metaphoric competence," individuals learn to work within metaphors, and to use them as the scaffolding to shore up and construct a new interpretive housing.[75] Authorship becomes an agility in working between meanings – in working between processes of self-constitution and self-narration – to compose an imperfectly coherent subject still bound by ethical obligations.

This last point is a difficult one. It suggests that the cacophony of voices within analysis belies more than our conflicting interpretations of our selves, our actions. The cacophony of voices helps us to recognize that our personal, ethical vocabularies are woven together from many different languages, different periods of time, different logics and commitments. Initially, only the analyst can clearly see the fantasy nature of what is being said. Returning to the problem, Loewald explains, "The patient experiences and acts without knowing at first that he is creating a play. Gradually he becomes more of an author aware of being an author, by virtue of the analyst's interventions that reflect back to the patient what he does and says, and by transferences that reveal the relations between the play and the original action that the play imitates."[76] What begins as the patient's being both proximate and distant to the events he narrates finishes with a sense of the voices differently attached to his roles of participant and author. One might say that the patient comes to author his own idio-ethics (to extend Lear's neologism of idio-polis). The development of a person's idio-ethics is not the product of rational justification (à la Habermas), or the filtering of moral traditions (à la Charles Taylor), or even aspect-dawning (à la Stanley Cavell). This housing is less a perspective or a belief system, or a fundamental doctrine – all terms that emphasize the cognitive aspect of ethics – than a containing space that sustains both articulate and inarticulate intuition, that remains reasonably porous to a broader culture, and whose stability is assessed in terms of the soundness of engineering rather than rational coherence.[77]

[75] James Tully, "Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy," *Political Theory*, May 1989, 17(2): 172–204.

[76] Loewald, *Papers*, 354.

[77] Evaluating such a housing is tricky. Jonathan Lear simply says that psychoanalysis seeks to make people happy rather than virtuous; "sound engineering" does not guarantee saintliness. Speaking to the analyst's role in any constructions, Loewald indicates three dimensions of evaluation in a passage worth quoting at length: "The art of the psychoanalyst, then, consists in a threefold activity that is therapeutic: (1) He promotes that

At this point, reality-testing can be seen as an activity of hazarding and testing lived propositions about one's world, rather than as seeking knowledge about the self. Such a conception of authority in authorship breaks from the usual conceptions that define authority in terms of the speaking subject and his capacity for reasoned judgment. Nor does it require "supplementing" rationality with imagination, with tolerance for pluralism, or with an appreciation of difference. These arguments, however sensitively made, implicitly recommend an ethical posture from which self-cultivation is to be assessed. Instead, the articulacy and steadiness of speaking for oneself comes from the ability to place – with help – one's wishes in conversation with one's wants. It requires building a bridge to one's fantasies and testing the conditions needed to actualize this bridge. Loewald argues, "Such repetition in the form of re-enactment, consciously and/or unconsciously reorganizes and reinterprets original action from certain points of view and in certain directions that are strongly influenced by present actuality."[78] If self-constitution initially results from a pained mix of cultural constraint and ego-formation, then self-narration draws attention to the activity of bridging that distance between the events of self-constitution and their subsequent narration. Self-narration becomes

regression which conjoins the patient's experiential past (memories and fantasies) with his experiential present – the actuality of the analytic situation – so that they tend to become one. (2) The analyst, by appropriately timed and appropriately responsive interpretations and other interventions that speak to the reflective levels and capacities of the patient, reminds him of the difference between past and present, between memory-fantasy and actuality. (3) In doing so, the analyst helps the patient to re-establish connections, links between these different facets of reality, links that give renewed meaning to memories and fantasy life and to the patient's actual life in the present. Insofar as the patient's experiences in the analytic situation become part of his mental life, they influence his future life. […] The resolution of the transference neurosis surely does not consist of renewed repression or any ultimate relinquishment of recovered memories and fantasies, but of employing them, revived and made available for development and change in the transference play, in actual living" (Loewald, *Papers*, 367). On the one hand, such evaluations frustrate by being deeply subjective and descriptive; they mean more to clinicians than to lay readers. On the other hand, the turn to descriptive evaluation is unavoidable in practice-based work. One might also ask whether psychoanalysis offers an orienting ideal, such as liberty, that might provide a touchstone for these evaluations. Loewald notes that Freud and his follower clearly believed psychoanalysis to be more than a therapy but that they never sought such an ideal because of their convictions that psychoanalytic practice converged on scientific truth. Freud's conflicted views in the *New Introductory Lectures* on whether psychoanalysis had its own *Weltanschauung* – he says 'no' – support that claim. Adapting psychoanalysis for politics, then, would require confronting this issue at greater length. In the context of this project, to the extent that psychoanalytic practice can be read alongside parrhesiastic practice, Foucault's orientation to "exercises of liberty" would provide that touchstone.

[78] Loewald, *Papers*, 359.

a process in which the narrating person more firmly occupies a narrating role toward the account given. As a result, her relation to events – to her life story – changes. For all that the events, persons, and contexts that bear on a person remain beyond her, these become considered as the immediate conditions for possibility and growth rather than the static furniture of existence: "In this complex interaction, patient and analyst – at least during some short but crucial periods – may together create that imaginary life which can have a lasting influence on the patient's subsequent actual life history."[79] The experience of authorship also radically changes. The patient takes on a different prominence in narrating "what comes next" rather than ceding such control to others. Enactments, as actions imitating actions, call up familiar understandings that are deeply embedded in one's worldview. The fact of their imitation and re-settlement in an imperfectly analogous setting introduces a gap between language and reality, thought and action – one that can be used as a wedge to pry each pair apart, and to investigate the investments attached to either one.

## From Enactments to Authorship

To drive a wedge between thought and action in such a way requires returning to two aspects of drives, repetition and substitution, with new eyes. Iteration is contested among feminists who see it either as central to the reproduction of social order, or as a moment of instability to be seized and amplified. Across the three theorists of performative claims cited earlier – Butler, Felman, and Zerilli – lies a great deal of variance in the treatment of repetition, substitution, and metaphor. For Butler, repetition and substitution tend to consolidate and sustain injury. Metaphor in the form of parody or drag exaggerates norms so as to call attention to their implicit shaping power. For Felman, repetition and substitution have a more ambiguous role in contributing to "family resemblances"; metaphor as "the very figure of [one's] own life" counters the force of the past with that of "new birth." It is an "act of begetting" itself, "a relation of consistency and of resemblance."[80] Zerilli, for her part, leans on the language of figuration so as to redirect attention to the formation of new collective identities. Each appeals to metaphor to call attention to third-person authority (be it the authority of cultural norms or of new collectivities) and to inspire individuals to relate themselves differently to

[79] Loewald, *Papers*, 369.
[80] Felman, *Scandal*, 24.

these authorities. Parody derives its force by throwing repetition askew; figuration by setting repetition aside. But what is to be done next? Both Butler and Zerilli note the problems of intentionality and resonance; performativity and figuration can neither be entirely volitional, nor can they forecast which individual acts will find collective symbolic resonance.

Read against this dilemma, the divergences of enactments from performatives become more significant. As actions imitating actions, enactments carry with them efforts to interpret; they are motivated, but the sense of these motivations is in play. Indeed, the very *activity* of play allows motivations to be engaged and refigured. Psychoanalytic play offers a space in which persons can become aware of these enactments, but also more aware of their inconsistencies. The intermediate space of psychoanalysis, grounded only in the relationship between analyst and patient, allows these enactments to be tested and their legitimation to be interrupted in a way not otherwise possible. The challenge to their auto-legitimation comes in three forms. It is posed by the person of the analyst, by the displacement of these enactments onto the imperfectly analogous context of the transference relationship, and through the resulting distension of form and meaning of the enactment. All of these enable the patient to become aware of being both actor and author of a play. If Butler's performativity rests on the invidious distinctions of comedy – distinctions that re-inforce convention while mocking it – then the fluidity of analytic play escapes that effect. Of course, the analytic encounter's ability to tease out and reflect on enactments depends in part on the strengths and limitations of the participants – again, Freud's blindness both to his counter-transference and to prevailing gender norms hobbled his ability to treat Dora. The counter-transference that binds the analyst, and the institutional structures offered by training and ongoing supervisory analysts, both embed a certain amount of reflexivity in the institution of psychoanalysis itself.[81]

As treatment proceeds, play gradually spills over and out of the container of analysis. Self-formation occurs, slowly, within the hollowed-out spaces of cultural structures, and is cognizant of the lingering effect of their detritus. Again, play unfolds in the odd temporality that is characteristic of the psychoanalytic encounter, that "transitional state between mere inner fantasy and actuality."[82] If the previous chapter concentrated

[81] Theodore Jacobs addresses how the analyst should recognize and respond to the enactments of countertransference in "On Countertransference Enactments," in *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 34: 289–307.

[82] Loewald, "Psychoanalysis as an art and the fantasy character of the psychoanalytic situation," in *Papers*, 369.

mostly on past and future, the focus shifts with play to the present, and foregrounds its uncertain footing. For all that analytic play captures the immediacy of the moment, that immediacy is created by compressing the distance between temporal moments (of historic past and analytic present) and psychic worlds (of fantasy or trauma and actuality). If psychoanalysis is to be understood as those practices that enable a person to let go of psychic structures that disable one for whatever reason, then the "present" of analysis is the subjective experience of this letting-go. Letting-go implies a gradual abandonment of one's "old" style of judgment and allowing the unknown to enter into conversation with other faculties. The change is not instantaneous, nor does it unfold in blank psychic space. Instead, individuals need a way to test themselves and to try out their changing faculty of judgment. Psychoanalysis offers a context that is more unconscious because of its relative lack of social self-consciousness. Both the experience of playfulness and the gradual awareness of writing a play allow the patient to intervene in the *narrative* production of the self.

Of course, the danger here is that this turn to agency remains rooted in old wounds. Broadly speaking, these are the concerns of Judith Butler and Wendy Brown. Butler argues that "prohibition reproduces the prohibited desire and becomes intensified through the renunciations it effects… desire is *never* renounced but becomes preserved and reasserted in the very structure of renunciation."[83] Reading this claim into politics, Brown powerfully argues that "politicized identity thus enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only by entrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics."[84] Even as modernity's subjects "anaesthetize and externalize what is otherwise 'unendurable,'" any "identity structured by this ethos becomes deeply invested in its own impotence"[85] and so

[83] Butler, *Psychic Life*, 81. Emphasis in the original. In Butler's only direct treatment of Freud in *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler promises to present an account of Freudian conscience and regulation, only to turn to *Civilization and its Discontents* after a brief two sentences about the social side of narcissism. Conscience would appear to be entirely the product of an internalization of external authority, and the subsequent repression of contrary impulses. In addition to being a partial reading of Freud – for an account of intrapsychic processes one might turn to the early *Introductory Lectures*, the late *Outline of a Theory of Psychoanalysis,* or the clinical writings that fall in between – it signals that Butler's conceptualization of resistance, conscience, and subject-formation (*assujétissement*) are framed almost entirely in psychosocial terms. As a result, Butler inadvertently closes down the possibility of finding the interpersonal dynamics in Freud to differ from his account of cultural dynamics. See Butler, *Psychic Life*, 78–89ff.

[84] Brown, *States*, 74.

[85] Brown, *States*, 70.

sustains "a bourgeois (masculinist) ideal as its measure."[86] The psychoanalytic relationship – downplaying Butler's drives and existing between fantasy and actuality – challenges these very dynamics. By expanding that transitional space between fantasy and actuality, the substitutions of psychoanalytic play linger on both past injury and fantasized ideal. The dynamics of collaboration and play seek to undo those practices that would leave this agentic turn as one of repression or wounded attachment. The reproduction of personal story and its playful substitution into new experiences is not, in such cases, the substitution of the general for the particular. It instead is that work of metaphoric extension. Such metaphoric extensions work against those usual instincts of self-preservation to see if personal limits, and one's attitudes towards those limits, can be explored and eased. Backing away from these limits means backing into a set of practices equally uncomfortable, unpredictable, and imperfect – but practices with the potential for growth and, perhaps, real challenge to broader cultural structures.

The result is something quite different from any generic appeal to "learning from experience." Deftness in reality-testing is not the correction of mistakes, or the filling in of gaps in ignorance. It is a recognition of the tension between the perspectives offered by self-narration and self-constitution – between autobiography and biography, so to speak. For Freud, childhood development on its own is not terminable; even in the best cases, it only teaches individuals how to assess the boundaries between their internal and external activities. Such development might enable individuals to feel comfortable and competent with such mediations, but it leaves open the question of whether "autobiographical competence" equates either to knowledge of themselves or to the ability to render themselves comprehensible to others. The developmental transition that enables children to differentiate themselves from others and to establish the boundaries of their personality means that children can no longer be totalizing little monsters: that is, they can no longer try to absorb others into themselves.[87] As adults, they must further recognize that they could never "really" feel the pain of others or know themselves completely. Their sense of self is composed of likenesses and approximations to various principled or embodied ideals – they want to be like their mother and unlike their father, like a courageous person and unlike an envious one. The search is first for a metaphoric equivalence, and

[86] Brown, *States*, 59.
[87] "On Narcissism," in SE 14, 67–102.

only then for criteria by which its ethical excellence can be evaluated. By insisting on these postures as metaphoric equivalences rather than defining qualities, Freud helps us to recognize that our knowledge of ourselves and others can only be partial.

The move away from sexual desire to interpretation itself differently invokes the framework of "substitution" to capture the passage of change and the symbolic investment of objects into the creation of a meaningful world. If initially reality-testing is connected to a child's learned ability to control the desire of auto-erotism, then this interpretive move accompanies the ability to tolerate discomfort and delay satisfaction of a different sort. Presumably, though, part of the ethical developmental process is the ability to make this substitution more than a functional way to handle loss. For substitutions to provoke disruptive growth, they ought be world-expanding; they should broaden the range of attachments and experiences. Once again, we are returned to the play of metaphor.

Where Butler tells a story in which substitution does violence to the singularity of person in the service of intelligibility, she overlooks the fact that we engage in practices of substitution all the time and for varied reasons. Sometimes substitution is harmful – such as when one person projects an ideal onto another, and so neglects to see the "real" person. Other times, though, the substitution is an adaptation for context – for example, when Freud observes a small child playing an invented "fort/da" game (a version of 'now you see it, now you don't') in which the child substitutes a hidden and then-found cork for his absent and then present mother.[88] In this instance, both the disruption created first through the absence of his mother, and then through his play with the cork, is initially just a change within his environment. The game the child contrives – a kind of peek-a-boo – makes this disruption into an opportunity for growth and development. Freud claims that "as the child passes over from the passivity of the experience to the activity of the game, he hands on the disagreeable experience."[89] The game enables the child to practice experiencing rupture, the sense of loss it entails, the endurance of this loss, and then the pleasurable return of the cork-mother. As Jonathan Lear persuasively reads this vignette, the child has no conception of "loss" before the invention of his game.[90] The child's play allows him to repeat the disruption and then transform it into a game structured

[88] Freud tells this story in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 13–17.

[89] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 15.

[90] Lear writes, "If we are trying to respect the child's point of view, we cannot even say that the game is prompted by loss. For it is only after the game is installed that the child

around concepts of loss and presence – concepts whose terms and experience the child, in the context of play, gets to control.

By emphasizing both the child's perspective and the fact that the organizing concepts or "rules" of the game emerge only through and after its invention, two insights are gained. First, the recognition that the child was not attempting to learn a prescribed lesson about loss. Lear argues, "Only when the game is established will the loss be a loss *for him*. The outcome of the game is to convert what would otherwise be a nameless trauma into a loss."[91] Responding to an ambivalent change in environment, the child transformed that change into an opportunity first for play, then for practice (via repetition), and eventually growth. The disruption occasioned by the absent mother was not in itself good or bad; it simply provoked an opportunity for the child to try his hand at scripting a pared-down version of the same narrative. Repeating the same peek-a-boo game with the cork becomes a way to control both the disappearance of an object, and his response to it, by braving that disappearance repeatedly.

Second, the repetitions of play, and the enacted repetitions within the psychoanalytic relationship, are likewise not uniformly positive or negative. They are merely instances in which the patient recognizes a disruption in the usual mechanics of his world. Rather than responding through an accommodation to the change – leaving its potential for trauma either unfelt or unacknowledged – the patient's attempt at a response stalls. Unable to resolve the disruption, or to make meaning out of it, the patient instead repeats the trauma, either by transferring it to the analytic context, revising it into a traumatic dream, or by displacing it to another analogous setting. Loewald claims that "The relative freedom from constraints in play and fantasy life is not only a relief from the exigencies of life, it also allows one to see beyond those exigencies and not to be overwhelmed by their constraints in actual living."[92] As the child learns not just to face the condition of loss but also to revisit it repeatedly, he develops it into a capacity for tolerance of pain or perhaps courage. That the child revisits loss, talks about it, turns it into a game all suggest that the experience is not one of repression. While the act of substitution can

will begin to have the concept of loss or absence. Only when the game is established will the loss be a loss *for him*. The outcome of the game is to convert what would otherwise be a nameless trauma into a loss" (p. 92). Jonathan Lear, *Happiness, Death, and the Remainder of Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[91] Lear, *Happiness*, 92.

[92] Loewald, 367.

be for the child an act of revenge – the act of passing on a disagreeable experience to someone else – adults oriented toward an audience can use such substitutions to work over the unpleasurable. They can become both agents and spectators of substitution and make it into a transformative experience similar to cartharsis.[93] By giving the initial, meaningless disruption and his subsequent response(s) to that narrative, the patient engages in processes of both self-constitution and self-narration. The repetition itself allows something normally taken for granted to be elevated to an uncommon attention.

Childhood events become important not because they are content-laden and determinate, but because their patterns build a repetition of social roles and templates. If canniness offers a sense of homeyness, it is the comfort of an interpretive housing suited to one's practices and position. By contrast, the haunting unease of the uncanny suggests that this housing and those practices are stressed and stretched thin. The accounts we give to explain who we are and where we come from no longer unreflectively signal and address a "we." Instead, authorship is being called upon to invoke and tell the story of tradition in a new way. One might turn Jessica Benjamin's analysis of Freud's case histories back on the psychoanalytic tradition itself, to find that relational psychoanalysis makes it possible to abandon binaries of subject and object, of passivity and activity. Housed itself within these paradoxes, it can "tolerate the incessant reversals of opposites" and "allow us to take the primal leap of psychoanalysis, the leap into the space between certain knowledge and unthinking action."[94] To return to Gérard Genette's authorship glossed in Chapter 1, it becomes possible for the patient to read himself on different terms and "after his own fashion" – and so to begin to author his own story. The patient's transition from passivity to agency mirrors this transformation from being a reader/spectator of a traumatic scene to becoming the author of its recounting.

Such a *Nacherziehung* differs markedly from public education in Freud's own time. Freud castigates the conventional disguise of sexuality behind stories of storks and other euphemisms. Unlike metaphors, euphemisms conceal and contract one's world rather than expand it through new associations. With some aggravation, Freud writes, "That the education of young people at the present day conceals from them the part which sexuality will play in their lives is not the only reproach which we

[93] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 17.
[94] Benjamin, "Primal Leap," 60.

are obliged to make against it. Its other sin is that it does not prepare them for the aggressiveness of which they are destined to become the objects… In this it becomes evident that a certain misuse is being made of ethical demands."[95] Education fails in its political tasks when political community lacks sufficient openness about its aggressions to admit that perceived necessity may drive it to invoke norms of consensus or impersonal authority. These pressures manifest themselves in our contemporary confusion of fear and anxiety. Necessity allows forced consensus to be tolerated in the name of material security. Freud's insistence on the distinctions between fear and anxiety proves helpful when security no longer is just physical threat but includes those anxieties provoked by often irreconcilable, interpretive traditions. Courage then becomes a quality that needs constant work and practice; virtuous habit cannot be an "adult" response to the withholding of aggression. Instead, courage is expressed through the willingness to listen behind one's words, to attend to inarticulate fantasy, and then to work through whatever challenge fantasy poses to actuality.

**Risk Society Re-examined**

As this chapter has moved away from the narrow professional domain of treatment to the political questions that orient the book, we are left with a partial account of the connections that link personal to political authority. If, by the close of the nineteenth century, moderns increasingly find themselves confronted with an impersonal political and social order, then the psychoanalytic relationship mitigates some of these effects. Commonly modernity is stylized as an increasingly differentiated world with low levels of social capital (howsoever construed), one that threatens the stability of personal identity. As a counter, psychoanalysis offers a unique kind of interpersonal intimacy organized around the pressures of disaggregation. The repeated recurrence of rupture and repair within the transference prepares individuals for the intimacy necessary to sustain relations of trust in other domains of activity. Psychoanalysis is not intended to be a "secular" substitution for religion; it does, however, rely on enactments to bridge the sacral moments of analysis with the profane and everyday in a manner that allows it to contribute to a material reworking of human relations.

[95] See *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1961), 97–98, fn1.

With such an emphasis on risk and resistance, might psychoanalytic practices further speak to more pessimistic accounts of late modernity as a post-industrial "risk society"?[96] Whereas nineteenth century modernist projects sought to personalize an impersonal politics, sociologist Ulrich Beck, among others,[97] has characterized the twentieth century in terms of an intensification of the detachment of individual from social structure.[98] Individualization detaches individuals from social structures (supposedly to the domain of liberal choice), and then externalizes risks to the surrounding environment. The result is a perverse social (rather than political) dependency on institutions and agents remote and inaccessible. Beck further argues that, driven by a desire to manage uncertainties, knowledge formation has created an overflow of unruly information that constantly threatens to exceed containment.

In response to the first concern, psychoanalysis would seem to speak to this simultaneous detachment and dependency of persons. After all,

[96] The association first of psychological categories and then psychological techniques with risk has been charted by many historians. For an account of the emergence and changing meaning of "hysteria," as well as its association with changing socio-economic structures and risks, see George Rousseau's "'A Strange Pathology': Hysteria in the Early Modern World, 1500–1800," in *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Jan Goldstein recovers the context for an early nineteenth century case history of "hysteria complicated by ecstasy" in which hysteria is surprisingly diagnosed without any reference to sexuality; see *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). Both suggest that the broad contours of the history and hazy periodization sketched by Michel Foucault in *History of Sexuality 1* were accurate. For a more complete treatment of this history, see Arnold Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Jan Goldstein, *Console, and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[97] The literature, both within the discourse on risk and critical of it, is vast. Prominent within this literature (and speaking directly to the relation of trust, risk, and danger) is Anthony Giddens's work in *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). *Consequences* is a mix of historical sociology and "thick description" that describes the experience and qualities of trust and risk from pre-modern through modern societies and in a variety of contexts. Beck, Giddens, and Scott Lash collaborated on *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994). Since these early works by Beck, Giddens, and Lash that sought to re-work standard categories of sociological analysis (power, society, the individual, work, culture, etc.), they have extended their paradigm of the "risk society" to explore issues in globalization, environmentalism, and social theory. Also prominent is the work of François Ewald on risk and insurance, notably the essay "Insurance and Risk" in *The Foucault Effect,* eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and *L'État Providence* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1986).

[98] Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1992).

Freud reminds us that our first experience with authority is a personal, and not obviously political, one.[99] Freud could be said to explain how we come to invest certain authoritative relationships with value; that is, how relations to others – to family, teachers, perhaps even a nation – come to have especial significance and to generate special responsibilities that cause us to feel the pull of obligation. His *Nacherziehung* thus would seem to help individuals to intervene more tactically into the management of relations of attachment – the experience and endurance of the fractious psychoanalytic relationship teaches them when to seek others out, and when to back away from relationships exhausted of potential. Although Freud presents no general theory as to what makes certain relationships significant ones, he does develop a psychology that can handle the particularity with which different individuals valorize certain relationships and not others. In contrast to social scientific "thick descriptions" of how trust relations are organized within groups, Freud offers us insight into the dynamics by which trust is established, sustained, and given ethical (in additional to social) value.

But in response to the second concern about the management of uncertainties, it is important to recognize the very different kind of risk engaged by psychoanalysis. Beck, and the others who write on the turn to risk management, conceive of risk largely in terms of an assessment of probabilistic outcomes. As François Ewald writes, "The notion of risk goes together with those of chance, hazard, probability, eventuality or randomness on the one hand, and those of loss or damage on the other."[100] Risk is continually associated with risks to physical or economic security – associations that, to be sure, have value-laden implications often masked by the appeal to material circumstance. The risk of political activity would seem to be associated with a judicious assessment of possibilities based on an extrapolation of whatever information is available. Critics of risk management mourn the privatization of social threats and political problems that would seem to make these problems of factual assessment and individual responsibility while eliding the broader context of collective

[99] The classical liberals were well aware of this point, and sought to ground political authority in opposition to paternalism. Nonetheless, such accounts tend to consider families as miniature polities and subsequently cast paternal authority versus state authority as a question of jurisdictional conflict. This tendency is reinforced by the literature on political and civic education, which conceives of education as caught in a contest between state and families.

[100] François Ewald, "Insurance and Risk," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality,* ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 199.

value. Initially, psychoanalytic practices would seem to speak exactly to these concerns. By softening the insistence on historical truth as a precondition for understanding and action, psychoanalysis helps individuals to consider problems not as ones of epistemological uncertainty or incomplete information, but as problems of valuation. Individuals can more subtly distinguish between those past investments now-bankrupt and those still endowed with potential meaning for the present. And, as argued earlier, psychoanalysis offers a vocabulary to raise issues in an ethical register other than that of individual responsibility or legal liability. Dispositions of courage, honesty, generosity, solidarity can thus more readily enter into conversation.

The result is an ability to grapple with more broadly symbolic issues and the anxieties they provoke. In this sense, psychoanalytic practices might assuage Beck's fear that "modern society lives off moral resources it is unable to renew; the transcendental 'value ecology' in which community, solidarity, justice and ultimately democracy are 'rooted,' is decaying; modernity is undermining its own indispensable moral prerequisites."[101] But far beyond Beck, psychoanalysis would seem to enable individuals to make of their past (both personal and collective) a resource through which to consider symbolic investments and attachments. The practices associated with psychoanalysis might further be able to help individuals face up to the stakes of any denaturalization of values that no longer have collective purchase. However, psychoanalysis enables individuals to do this *as individuals*, and not as citizens or members of some other community. It is notable that the terms invoked by Beck are all communal – solidarity, participatory democracy, and moral ecology. For all that psychoanalysis contributes to an understanding and exercise of interpretive authority, its social and political effects as a practice are necessarily limited. Existing in that "intermediate region" between illness and life permits the therapeutics of analysis; this intermediate region, however much it engages broader cultural conventions and symbolic investments, is also intermediate to personal and public speech. The practices of the analytic process were never designed for broader social extrapolation. Indeed, with the termination of analysis, the analyst dies something of a "social death" in that as the patient's need for those interactions withers, so does the analyst's quasi-social existence. Even as analysis can help individual persons, and may even contribute a new conceptual vocabulary to a person and a culture in transition, the practices and experiences of analysis cannot obviously or immediately be scaled up for politics.

[101] Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, 6.

The claim about the limits on the broader reach of psychoanalysis will be considered at greater length in Chapter 6. For now, the value of psychoanalysis lies in sorting through the distinction between material and moral risk. On contemporary terms, risk is generally theorized either in terms of a background set of material or economic concerns, or as a general situation of uncertainty and indeterminacy. In such situations, efforts to manage uncertainty through probabilistic thinking or cost/benefit analysis is a rationalist approach to an imperfectly rational world. The kind of risk for which a *Nacherziehung* prepares, however, is different. It is not the risk of unpredictability (between possible outcomes), but the risk of what cannot be known because the stakes and consequences of a course of action do not yet exist. Where unpredictability is a way to adjudicate between the likelihood of possible outcomes, *Nacherziehung* teaches individuals to face the risks of that which escapes adjudication because it is not yet stable and known. Even as psychoanalysis would seem to leave the extension of individual to collective practices uncertain, it helps persons confront the unknown, to evaluate themselves and others on terms other than responsibility or liability, and to enter into conversations about value and commitment.

## An Unintegrated Subject

These psychic investments in others and ourselves make psychoanalytic techniques something more powerful than just another model of self-reflexivity. Freud's self-governance is more than rational thought and self-examination; it requires accepting the notion that one's motivations will often be opaque, and that to live within a healthy self requires an understanding of one's psychic structure while coming to terms with the knowledge that this understanding will never achieve the level of pure comprehension. It requires a complicated psychological development that enables one to trust in and enact oneself, even as that self remains unruly and unknown.

Freud further helps us to understand that in seeking independence in self-formation, we misunderstand the terms of both freedom and dependency. In thinking of freedom as an ideal state to be achieved, we lose sight of those practices in freedom that we use to bootstrap our way along in moments of change. These are practices that oblige us to acknowledge and assess the potential arbitrariness of those limits and constraints that we had previously taken to be conventionally and unreflectively necessary. Such a categorical understanding of freedom has also prompted us to fear

dependency and to consistently situate dependency as something to grow up and out of, to denigrate morally, or to decry politically. Freud instead makes some dependencies and moral anxieties – those associated with an often-times pre-conscious childhood – into a resource for political agency. This is not to romanticize childhood or dependency, or to minimize the ways in which the rhetoric of childhood has been politically deployed to justify disenfranchisement. The ability to recognize the experience of dependency and to surmount it once more – to retain the simultaneous perspective of child and adult – makes it possible to acknowledge the uncertainties that make repression tempting, while cultivating strategies to adjudicate these experiences rather than be captured by them.

Freud can thus speak to the dynamics and experience of alienation without being captured by them. Here it is worth noting that Freud and the bulk of his patients were politically marginalized figures for whom such anxiety was significant. Freud experienced the steady erosion of first his civil rights and then his political rights as a Jew living in the waning days of the Austro-Hungarian empire and its successor Austrian state.[102] Many of his patients were either impoverished aristocrats, whose political status remained as their social and economic wealth declined, or bourgeois women who were unable to translate social and economic power into independence of any sort. One advantage of psychoanalytic theory is that it provides a vocabulary to speak to such experiences in subjectivity; Ernest Gellner argues that it replaces the psychological *pays légal* with the *pays réel*.[103] Yet for all of Freud's implicit critique of a liberal political landscape, he is not seeking to do away with consent or liberal political institutions. His comments in *Civilization and its Discontents* make it clear that there can be no "going back." The practices he develops, though, exceed the unevenly liberal and failed democratic context from which they emerged. Despite the clear political implications of these practices, Freud leaves them in their state of excess. He does not attempt to reconcile either self-constitution and self-narration, or our ethical and political educations. Instead he comments, "The physician will leave it to the jurist to construct for social purposes a responsibility that is artificially limited to the meta-psychological ego. It is notorious that the

[102] Freud's daughter, Anna, accepted the Goethe Prize on Freud's behalf in 1930. As Freud describes it, "This was the climax of my life as a citizen. Soon afterwards the boundaries of our country narrowed and the nation would know us no more." See "Postscript to an Autobiographical Study" in SE 20, 73.

[103] Ernst Gellner, *The Psychoanalytic Movement: The Cunning of Unreason* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993).

greatest difficulties are encountered by the attempts to derive from such a construction practical consequences which are not in contradiction to human feelings."[104] That Freud's self is ultimately unintegrated does not necessarily make it flawed or incoherent. Coherence cannot be a goal or criteria for moral outlooks – I would argue that humans cannot have such outlooks and still maintain their humanity. Imperfect coherence allows for contradiction, but also for the possibility of intellectual and emotional growth and development as one seeks to grapple with such contradictions. For Freud's (primarily therapeutic) purposes, what might begin as an experience of alienation culminates in the ability to dispose more readily of one's impulses and frustrations both – and in a manner that potentially leverages psychic disruptions into a powerful challenge to the formative structures of culture.

[104] See "Some Additional Notes on Dream-Interpretation as a Whole," SE 19, 1943 [1925], 134.

# 4

# What Is an Author(ity)?

## The Educative Model of *Parrhesia*

Like Freud's educative psychoanalyst, Foucault's ancient truth-teller (or *parrhesiastes*) serves as an important hinge between individual projects of self-formation and collective practices. These figures differently serve as the symbolic, nodal points that bind micro-level practices to those that are more broadly constitutive of a culture or society. Chapters 2 and 3 reread Freud's clinical papers to draw from the psychoanalytic encounter a combative collaboration that mitigates its inherent asymmetries. Forbearing any attention to psychodynamics, Foucault's reading of ancient practices of *parrhesia* (fearless speech) nonetheless relies on an exchange with strikingly similar dynamics. Simply, *parrhesia* is frank speech irreducible to power or interest. Where Freud develops interpretive skill so as to shore up individuals in the face of disintegration, however, Foucault cultivates its potential to disrupt an over-stabilized self. Without endorsing any one of these ancient models for self-examination – including, among others, Platonic soulcraft, Seneca's internal monitor, and Diogenes' public scandal – Foucault uses their variations to unsettle the modern hegemony of the confessing subject. He invokes *parrhesia* to focus attention on those performative aspects of truth-telling that shade, and at times, counter its potential to be productive. Such are the claims central to this chapter and the one following. I must defend this account of Foucault and *parrhesia* against those classicists who would argue that Foucault seeks a more straightforward recovery of frank political speech. I must also address those convinced by Foucault's earlier claims that confessional technologies have irrevocably enabled power to bleed deeply into conscience. My

account thus places me deeply at odds both with those who insist that Freud and psychoanalysis are but a "negative animus" for Foucault, and with those habituated to the Foucault of biopower, governmentality, and discipline.

The link between Freud and Foucault lies in their insight that self-formation results from a confrontation with authority, under certain conditions, even as this confrontation simultaneously negotiates and rewrites the terms of authority. For Freud, this confrontation makes it possible to broach the competing perspectives of analyst and patient without conclusively stabilizing either claim to truth. While Foucault leaves the psychodynamics of educative relationships unexplored, we will see that he shares Freud's turn to practices of interpretation. More so than Freud, he seeks to extend these outward beyond the parrhesiastic encounter to bear on social relations of trust and truth-telling. Thus the combative collaboration we saw in psychoanalysis becomes a more publicly viable model of interlocution that seeks to extend interpretive authority into ethics and political life. To be sure, these lectures, which offer readings of ancient texts absent any clear argumentative frame, present an interpretive challenge to scholars. Some have read these lectures in terms of Foucault's intellectual trajectory;[1] others extend Foucault's earlier claims about resistance or confession to find that the lectures implicitly endorse one model or another;[2] and still others recover a lost mode of rhetoric to be salvaged for contemporary politics.[3] My emphasis on the irreducible relationality of *parrhesia* instead enables us to understand how persons can be subordinated subjects and yet nonetheless become authorial agents of change. To defend this claim, I read Foucault's late lectures in the context of his earliest essays on regimes of authorship.

Although scholars have long recognized that Foucault sought an ethics founded in neither a religious nor a legal renunciation of desire,[4] they

[1] Thomas Flynn is one of the first to write about Foucault and *parrhesia* in "Truth and Subjectivation in Later Foucault," *The Journal of Philosophy* 82.10 (1985): 531–40; followed by "Foucault as Parrhesiast: His Last Course at the Collège de France (1984)," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 12 (1987): 213–29.

[2] Michael Hardt, "The Militancy of Theory," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110.1 (2011): 19–35.

[3] Elizabeth Markovits, *The Politics of Sincerity: Plato, Frank Speech, and Democratic Judgment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008). To read *parrhesia* against the American free speech tradition, see Arlene Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[4] "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, volume 1 (New York: The New Press, 1994), 255–56.

have struggled to theorize its form. Pierre Hadot was one of the first to characterize this ethics as organized around those "practices of the self" that compose daily living rather than moral imperatives. Later scholars, and notably Arnold Davidson, David Owen, and James Tully, have situated these lectures more firmly against the backdrop of Wittgenstein and ordinary language philosophy to offer compelling readings of parrhesiastic practices as a "form of life." These contributions notwithstanding, I think that it would be a mistake to attach these lectures only to that tradition. The strength of these readings lies in their deeply textured ethics – one very close to a virtue ethics – that captures the sedimentation of softly murmuring convention. This framework, however, mutes the political risks and resistances that inflect the interactions sustained by these practices.

The key to understanding Foucault's late works as speaking to ethics and authority, rather than to power, lies in specifying the practices involved. John Rajchman finds the *History of Sexuality* series oriented toward "the practical question of freedom" so as "to replace an ethic of articulating suppressed desires and feelings with an ethic of 'choosing' the forms of experience through which we constitute ourselves."[5] Rajchman's language of choice, however, inadvertently misleads us toward a volitional subject of intentions or an aesthetics of self-creation. Instead, the crucial part of Rajchman's claim lies in its appeal to *form*. Much as is done in the clinical practice of psychoanalysis, Foucault must specify *how* these experiences become constitutive of self. What are the processes by which persons might come to find a person, claim, or event to be "authoritative"? Even as Foucault, like Freud, invokes the paradoxical relation of liberty and authority, he more deliberately orients these practices toward the dilemmas of governance. Where Freud's combative collaboration emerges from modernity's "crisis of evidence" – the failed appeal to truth to settle disputes – Foucault differently addresses a crisis in governance, or the use of rule, to stabilize conventions. Invoking the mirror for princes literature, Foucault redirects its counsel to advise the governed on how to participate in the activity of governance.[6] Like Freud, he rejects the fantasy of liberation from authority, and finds freedom in an engagement with authority (even as this engagement revises and negotiates its terms). Differently from Freud, Foucault appeals to a self-governance premised

[5] John Rajchman, "Ethics after Foucault," *Social Text* 13/14 (1986): 165–83, 167.

[6] Such a reading is suggested by Foucault's juxtaposition of "a certain form of political discourse whose object would be government of …the Prince's soul" with the *Aufklärung* sought by Kant for the immature and publics alike. *GS*, 6ff.

on a divestment from existing identities rather than a re-invigoration of affective ties. Once again, individuals paradoxically cultivate the exercise of liberty through a personal relationship to authority. And governance becomes a different kind of resistance: resistance to the alienation of judgment either to social judges or political institutions.

To theorize self- and political governance, Foucault turns to ancient ethical practices of *parrhesia* and reads them as a means to establish and assess claims to truth-telling through a combative exchange between speaker and audience. In his late lectures, Foucault calls attention to the practices that organize such exchanges and permit them to be evaluated as truthful and sincere – the two conditions necessary to make individual claims productive of the social trust crucial for governance.[7] In the process, Foucault develops a powerful, contemporary model for truth-telling that does not require the audience to have more or better access to truth, to have any specialized knowledge, or to be in a position to trump the claims of the speaker. *Parrhesia* thus allows us to distinguish analytically those relations that *produce* individuals (to fit a specific mold) from those that *educate* individuals for self-governance (such that they are the result of their own design). The appeal to truth-tellers is not a return to the archetypical roles of doctors and educators that bind power and knowledge together in the form of modern expertise. Rather, Foucault's model refashions parrhesiastic authority along new lines in such a way that these interactions instead generate trust and educate individuals. This claim should surprise. It suggests that Foucault finds in ancient *parrhesia* more than a mere prehistory to the dynamics that structure Christian confession or the psychoanalytic encounter. It also opens the possibility that Foucault's work sought to move beyond ancient models of self-cultivation, and to adapt *parrhesia* for the contemporary world. The next two chapters will propose a framework for the authoritative practices of *parrhesia*. In this chapter, I will treat the relationship to authority – the relationship to a truth-teller, or *parrhesiastes* – as organized through three movements: the search for a truth-teller, the testing of his authority,

[7] Foucault's argument reads well against Bernard Williams's *Truth and Truthfulness*. While Foucault does not analyze the norms of sincerity and accuracy (and the dangers of authenticity) as Williams does, they share an emphasis on practices understood from the "bottom up." Both thinkers follow Nietzsche in backing away from absolute values and certain truths. Such a move, argues Williams, need not oblige one to deny the purchase of truth claims. Instead, it redirects attention to *qualities of truthfulness* (in a person) and truth-telling as a contextually bound *activity*. Foucault's account differs from Williams in its emphasis on the ethical persona of a truth-teller. Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

and the ensuing "care of the self." In the next chapter, I will consider the expressive subject that emerges from this relationship to authority and that itself becomes an authorial agent of change.

## Authorship and Authority

As discussed earlier in Chapter 1, Foucault's readers are more likely to associate him with power than authority. Unusually, Foucault speaks of 'authority' in the opening lecture on Kantian publics in *The Government of Self and Others*, and also in the lectures that follow. 'Authority' marks the exercise of power with and among members of a community, as well as its legitimation in a context in which power is present without being fully determinant. Although not inimical to Foucault's analysis of those social institutions that bear on self-formation, I contend that his model of parrhesiastic authority resonates most with his earlier writings on regimes of authorship and authority – writings themselves deeply inflected by psychoanalytic approaches to meaning. Unlike in his earlier writings, the parrhesiastic model allows him to hold onto a hermeneutic play between ancient educator and student that extends these interactions from words to deeds and from text to world. This reading of Foucault's late lectures against his earliest writings has been obscured by the tendency to consider these writings – including *What is an Author?*, *The Order of Discourse, Theatrum Philosophicum*, and *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx* – as "literary essays" with primarily aesthetic concerns. What if we were to read them in a political register instead? Such a reading would recover the political context of the late 1960s when Foucault found himself "off to the side" of a Left politics torn between an increasingly schematic Marxist discourse and querulous party squabbles, and "off to the side" of a philosophic tradition rent by totalizing Hegelian and Marxist frameworks and the individualism of existentialist philosophy. (Incidentally, Foucault's critique of psychoanalysis plays out largely on similar terms: as caught between the contradictions of an ahistorical, metapsychological subject of drives and the behaviorism of positivist psychology.) Foucault's turn to literary formalists such as Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, and Gérard Genette becomes a search for a language with which to develop a different narrative of history without the baggage of classical argument. Read in this light, the thrust of *What is an Author?* is to describe a regime of power, and the analogous relationship of obedience generated between reader and author. The name of the author serves to patrol the boundaries of discourse: "The name seems always to be present, marking

off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterizing, its mode of being. […] [I]t is located in the break that founds a certain discursive construct…"[8] The author function serves to regulate "the proliferation of meaning"; it becomes a way to "reduce the great peril" posed by the "cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations."[9] On such a reading, the regulation of authority spreads beyond the political regulation of bodies or economic goods to include the status and value of meaning. Authority becomes very tightly tied to authorship and to the regime of truth that makes possible both the figure of the author and the process of authorization.

Authorship thus becomes an effort to refuse these poles of desire and discourse, ahistorical structures and phenomenology, liberty and authority, and instead to open up the agency possible in their discursive breaks. Opportunities for authorship would seem to exist in the moment immediately prior to discursive founding or subsequent to its dissolution. Barely a year later, in December 1970, Foucault returns to these themes of authority in his inaugural address *L'Ordre du discours* given at the Collège de France. Foucault begins the address – itself a ritualized moment in the French Academy – by invoking his own person as author and authority. He imagines an easier speech should there be a voice behind him both acknowledging the anxiety attached to the talk while urging him onward. Returning from this ventriloquized imagining, Foucault says, "A good many people, I imagine, harbor a similar desire to be freed from the obligation to begin, a similar desire to find themselves, right from the outset, on the other side of discourse, without having to stand outside it, pondering its particular, fearsome, and even devilish features."[10] If the institution responds by solemnizing the occasion, delimiting it with silence and attention, then desire becomes chatty. It confesses to not wanting to enter this "risky world of discourse" (*ordre hasardeux du discours*), of wanting no truck with the trenchant and decisive, of wishing that "all around me was a calm transparency, profound, infinitely open, with others responding to my expectations, and truths emerging, one by one."[11] Foucault concludes with an image of discourse that by now has become well familiar. His image of discourse is one in which speech is regulated by three elements:

[8] "What is an Author?" 211.

[9] "What is an Author?" 221.

[10] In French: "Il y a chez beaucoup, je pense, un pareil désir de n'avoir pas à commencer, un pareil désir de se retrouver, d'entrée de jeu, de l'autre côté du discours, sans avoir eu à considérer de l'extérieur ce qu'il pouvait avoir de singulier, de redoubtable, de maléfique peut-être." The translation is mine. *L'Ordre du discours*, 8.

[11] *L'Ordre du discours*, 9.

the taboos associated with certain subjects, the ritual of circumstance, and the privileged status of the speaking subject.

What is less obviously recognizable in this sketch is how cleanly the practices of *parrhesia* as "fearless speech"[12] break with these three elements. Where Foucault's early work is quite critical of claims to absolute truth or efforts to stabilize distinctions between truth and falsity, with *parrhesia* he shifts to a contextual "speaking-truly" whose movement through activities of searching, testing, and caring contests all three of these compositional elements of discourse. This is not to say that parrhesiastic speech is transgressive, wanton, or the speech of the excluded – far from it. Simply put, parrhesiastic practices are more than a rejection or violation of these three elements: instead, they challenge the very terms that organize the three into something as cohesive as "discourse." And so it becomes more clear why Foucault is concerned to distinguish *parrhesia* from chatter or licentious speech. *Parrhesia* is more than an unreflective or impulsive negation. Instead, in its practices, speakers accede to a status and a set of rituals that permits them to challenge, rework, or elaborate taboo subjects on the authority of something other than institutions: on the authority of themselves. That Foucault in this lecture continues to distinguish truthfulness in speech-activity from the truth content of the claims themselves[13] further illuminates his continuous, and otherwise puzzling, insistence on the formal aspects rather than the substantive aspects of *parrhesia* as a *dire-vrai*. The distinction arises not from any putative relativism or evasive turn to formalism but from a Nietzschean-inspired effort not to tear asunder speaker and claim (or, doer and deed). Succinctly put, *parrhesia* challenges *le discours vrai* with *le dire vrai*.

That Foucault should have such a grand trajectory in mind as he lectured before the Collège de France in 1970 is unlikely. And yet such a reading of *parrhesia* against his early writings on authorship anchors an interest in ethics, truth-telling, and subjectivity in his late lectures that otherwise risks being interpreted as a self-reckoning in the face of death, or an adoption of

[12] Foucault begins three of his lecture series with lengthy discussions of *parrhesia* as *dire-vrai* (literally, speaking truly) and *franc-parler* (literally, frank-spokenness; frank speech). His comments show great attention to historical and philological context, and suggest that the term's first English translation as "fearless speech" might not be the most apt. I've stayed with this translation for reasons of pragmatics. As the first translation (and the title of the published volume of Berkeley lectures), it has some amount of currency. In addition, it preserves the sense that Foucault seeks to re-appropriate these practices for contemporary use: to think through the challenges besetting ethical subjectivity and political action.

[13] *L'Ordre du discours*, 17ff.

barbed speech too easily associated with both Socrates and contemporary critique. To continue with the terms Foucault lays out in *L'Ordre du discours*, his interest in authorship is not simply to challenge its institutionalization so as to permit an unfettered desire to run riot. Such a claim would evade exactly those ordering mechanisms that would newly grant any such "permission." Instead, Foucault speaks to the unstable admixture of anxiety and desire that prompts this moment of hesitation before speech, and that turns the silent "circle of attention" into an unresponsive Other rather than a patient, public audience actively thinking alongside.

In both Foucault's early and late lectures, his primary interest lies in those orderings that regulate meaning and silence. We might now consider Foucault's claim that "Every education system is a political manner of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, with the knowledges and powers that they carry with them."[14] Where in *L'Ordre* Foucault uses this claim to call attention to the rituals that modify speech and didactically form subjects (both in their relation to discourse and in their relations to others), the practices of *parrhesia* suggest that its own education might respond differently to this appropriation, and so intervene in the processes of subject-making and unmaking. As Foucault tells the story – and, like many of his earlier essays, it reads as story rather than an argument – this turn to discourse and the mediating role of the subject takes different forms at different times. One might follow his lead to elaborate the notion that modernity saw the distinction between science, literature, and history as three different modes in which to regulate discourses of truth: truth as verifiable claim; truth in meaning; truth as fact.[15] Characteristic among these disciplinary societies is an apprenticeship both to membership and to a secret knowledge manifested but not divulged; "between speaking and listening, roles were not exchangeable."[16] *Parrhesia*, then, is striking for being premised on this very exchange of roles. Even as *parrhesia's* practices manifest a kind of public claiming, Foucault claims that these practices are legible without being rigidified through hierarchy. Crucially, the practices of *parrhesia* refuse the disciplinary organization of truth that camouflages its instabilities.

Foucault's late lectures, I argue, demonstrate both an intellectual shift remarkable for its sweep, along with a return to first beginnings. Even

[14] *L'Ordre du discours*, 46.

[15] Psychoanalysis is mentioned as contributing to the figure of 'author' in a manner quite different from science, literature, and philosophy. *L'Ordre du discours*, 66–67.

[16] In French: "entre la parole et l'écoute les rôles n'étaient pas échangeables." *L'Ordre du discours*, 42.

as Foucault moves away from his preoccupation with discourse, governmentality, and biopower, he returns to his earliest interests in authorship, psychology and psychoanalysis. Like Freud, Foucault finds moderns confronted with seemingly interminable interpretations; with the need to materialize the space in which interpretation circulates; and a subject ethically and politically paralyzed by her inability to stabilize either interpretation or its circulation. Although Foucault will never concede to Freud's model of the mind, his work on *parrhesia* shares with Freud a preoccupation with relationships to authority, the dynamics that govern these, and the ethical practices that result. As we will see, the psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships each train individuals differently for contest rather than quiescence, and serve as a counterpoise to the impersonality of political structure. Avoiding the politically naïve assumption that mutual respect or equality of position must precede trust or truth-telling, these educative encounters are risky and uncertain. Risk is a condition for these speech-activities to unfold and ensures that neither party can unilaterally govern the outcome. As sites of speech, both psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* seek to disable the usual speech of deliberation so as to incite claims not yet over-written with moral finality or political decision. Key to the success of these relationships is that risk be transformed into the resistance to authoritative *interpretation* rather than into a wholesale rejection of all authority. Risk is not something, by this account, to be overcome or managed. It guarantees the sincerity of educators – they have something to lose – while testing and reinforcing the students' independence. Letting go of risk for both Freud and Foucault, threatens students with either a fall into dependency or an abuse of power. Instead, these relationships slowly draw persons out of themselves and propel them toward assuming the authority of governance in their own right. Thus, broader relations of political hierarchy come to be re-interpreted, challenged, and exploded from within.

## From Paris to Athens

Covering the period roughly from the fifth century B.C.E. and the second century C.E., Foucault's late lectures are notable for their sweep and for their lack of theoretical framework. Without motivating his inquiry, Foucault's initial lectures define *parrhesia* on general terms and then trace the evolution of its practices from Pericles to Diogenes, touching on Plato, Seneca, Epictetus, and Galen along the way. In Foucault's usage, *parrhesia* denotes both a particular category of speech as well as the set of practices that

govern its usage. Foucault distinguishes it from other types of speech: from the flattery of a sophist, from the too-free flow of chatter, and from coercive persuasion and rhetoric.[17] Yet *parrhesia* is also more than verbal utterances; by Foucault's reading it also encompasses a broader set of personalized ethical practices that finish by constructing relationships to oneself, to authority, and to truth: "The one who uses *parrhesia*, the *parrhesiastes*, is someone who says everything he has in mind: he does not hide anything, but opens his heart and mind completely to other people through his discourse … The word *parrhesia*, then, refers to a type of relationship between the speaker and what he says."[18] So *parrhesia* is a particularly direct way of speaking, a speech "without ornament,"[19] without pretense, a speech that aims at truthfulness rather than at persuasion or entertainment; such speech directly contradicts the elusive and illusive words of rhetoric. Again, the usual scholarly contexts for these ancient texts are curiously absent. Instead, Foucault's lectures on the ancients present a range of parrhesiastic episodes from which Foucault delicately disentangles analytic commonalities from the contingencies of context.[20] He grounds parrhesiastic practices in the truth-teller's consideration of context and *manner* of speech, rather than in the *matter*, or content of that speech.[21]

The critical response to Foucault's work has varied a great deal across fields – from the enthusiastic embrace of philosophers to the general

[17] See *Fearless Speech* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 2001), 11–24. See S. Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 52–3; and Arlene Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 85–9.

[18] See *Fearless Speech* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 2001), 12.

[19] Foucault makes this claim despite disagreement among classicists as to whether *parrhesia* ought count as rhetoric. In some ways, the disagreement turns on the definition of rhetoric implied. Where for classicists, rhetoric denotes a category of speech defined on formal terms (and so, especially given Foucault's formal analysis of the dynamics of *parrhesia* it would seem it "count" as rhetoric), its everyday usage has pejorative political and ethical connotations often associated with Plato's condemnation of sophistry. Foucault's overriding point, however, is simply that the formal structures of *parrhesia* do not over-determine its ethical force. See *GS*, 53–7 and 327–36.

[20] Michael Hardt's essay "Militant Life" provides a good overview of the substance and trajectory of the lectures without a strong critical bias in any direction. See *New Left Review* 64, July-August 2010. Recent work on Foucault and *parrhesia* that develops the political implications of these practices can be found in David Owen, "Perfectionism, Parrhesia, and the Care of the Self: Foucault and Cavell on Ethics and Politics" in *The Claim to Community*, ed. Andrew Norris (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Eric Paras, *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge* (Other Press, 2006); T. R. Flynn, "Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault," *The Journal of Philosophy* 82.10 (1985): 531–540.

[21] I borrow this phrasing from Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

disapprobation of Anglophone classicists.[22] Characteristic of this secondary literature is a real uncertainty about which interpretive frame might best encase it. Many have noted Foucault's abandonment of the project of sexuality, and have sought to develop Foucault's fourfold schema for subjectivation found in *The Use of Pleasure* – a schema Foucault abandons by 1982.[23] Scholars of ancient thought, while acknowledging Foucault's contribution, have sought to recover more fully and completely the ancient context for practices of the self. Sara Monoson's work has brilliantly disputed Foucault's distinction between political and philosophic *parrhesia*, for example, in order to recover the democratic entanglements of Platonic philosophy.[24] Elizabeth Markovits has sensitively read the treatments of parrhesiastic speech across different Platonic texts to direct contemporary attention away from stipulated norms of sincerity and toward assessments of personal *ethos*.[25] As a result both of disciplinary commitments and available material, political theorists of the ancient world have concentrated

[22] Pierre Hadot, most famously, disputed the accuracy of many of Foucault's claims. For an account of these disputes, see Pierre Hadot, *La philosophie comme manière de vivre: entretiens avec Jeannie Carlier et Arnold Davidson* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 2001), 215–19. For an overview of Hadot's position see Arnold Davidson's "Introductory Remarks to Pierre Hadot" as well as Hadot's own "Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse in Ancient Philosophy," both in *Foucault and his Interlocutors,* ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997). Averil Cameron constitutes an early exception. She defends Foucault's reading of Antiquity in "Redrawing the Map: Early Christian Territory after Foucault," *The Journal for Roman Studies*, 76 (1986): 266–71. A. A. Long later joins her with "Seneca on the Self: Why Now?" in *Seneca and the Self*. Other later fellow-travelers include Maud Gleason, "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E." in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); "Truth Contests" in *Constructions of the Classical Body,* ed. James I. Porter (University of Michigan Press, 1999). Scholars less convinced of Foucault's relevance to the ancient world include Amy Richlin, who seeks to exclude the Roman world from Foucault's analysis, in "Zeus and Metis: Foucault, Feminism, and Classics," *Helios* 18.2 (1991): 160–80. For a good collection of essays from a range of perspectives, see *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity*, ed. David Larmour, Paul Allen Miller, and Charles Platter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[23] Arnold Davidson helpfully contextualizes Foucault's work on practices of the self by situating it biographically as well as against French classicists (Pierre Hadot, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Paul Veyne) and moral philosopher Stanley Cavell. See "Ethics and Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd edition, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). In the same volume, see also James Bernauer and Michael Mahon's essay "Michel Foucault's Ethical Imagination."

[24] Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*.

[25] Markovits, *The Politics of Sincerity.*

almost entirely on Foucault's reading of Plato.[26] Beyond political theory, Anthony Long, Shadi Bartsch, and David Wray have inquired as to whether Seneca's self is truly discontinuous from early ancient conceptions and the later Cartesian subject.[27] Taking issue with Foucault's neglect of Stoic cosmic rationality, Pierre Hadot's work offers a fine-grained analysis of the spiritual cosmos variously re-written across Hellenist, Roman, and early Christian traditions. The primary commitment of this second group is to the enrichment of our understanding of the ancient world. A third grouping of scholars concentrates on the French intellectual scene, so as to reconstruct intellectual affinities between Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, and others, either around the political salience of Antiquity for post-war French thought (as in Miriam Leonard's *Athens in Paris*) or around a more specific engagement with Plato (as with Paul Allen Miller's book on post-modern spiritual practices).[28] All readings offer excellent insights. They treat the political loss of a project on sexuality cut short; the impertinences of Foucault's wanderings through the ancient world; and the important resonance of post-war ethical reflection with the ancient relation of *logos* and *ergon*. Each framework gives up something important, however. To the extent that ancient political theorists move "forward" to the contemporary context, these texts rely on a correspondence of concepts (e.g., free speech or straight talk) and criteria across historical periods. The second group favors adjudicating Foucault's position on the politics of sexuality at the cost of understanding the new possibilities emergent from abandoning his initial project. And while the third framework recovers a significant intellectual context, it risks over-stating the French interest in Antiquity as a coherent

[26] Classicists are an exception here. Pierre Hadot's pre-eminent work on ancient spiritual exercises engages with Foucault on the Stoics, and Hadot and Maud Gleason have also used Foucault in studies of early Christianity. Likewise, a cluster of classicists including A. A. Long, Shadi Bartsch, David Wray, Brad Inwood, Catharine Edwards, Martha Nussbaum, and Christopher Gill have vibrantly engaged Foucauldian approaches to Seneca. While some of this work is motivated by disciplinary interests, thinkers such as Paul Veyne and Arnold Davidson have brought their expertise to bear on more Foucauldian pre-occupations with ethics and interpretive method.

[27] A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*; Shadi Bartsch and David Wray, "Introduction," *Seneca and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Several essays in this second volume address the status of a Stoic self. Brad Inwood challenges whether the Senecan self is capable of the self-reflexivity and transformation sought by Foucault, in "Seneca and Self Assertion"; Christopher Gill argues that, for that Seneca weighs the competing forces of integration and disintegration, he offers an ideal of psychic-ethical integration, in "Seneca and Selfhood: Integration and Disintegration."

[28] Miriam Leonard, *Athens in Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Paul Allen Miller, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2007).

conversation or research program.[29] Such a reading would obscure any efforts to move beyond the terms of that conversation altogether.

The absence of usual scholarly frameworks is on clear display in Foucault's reading of the *Seventh Letter*, in which Plato recounts his three trips to Syracuse and his conversations there with the tyrant Dionysius. In some ways, Foucault's reading of the *Seventh Letter* is not all that different from that of earlier scholars. Like them, he recounts the surrounding context; the complexity of Plato's relationship to young Dion, nephew to Dionysius and a former student of Plato; the risks involved in the second and third trips especially. Other features of the usual accounts of the *Letter* are left out – rather than noting the Anglophone debate about the *Letter*'s authenticity, he says that *Letters 6, 7,* and *8* are certainly genuine (a claim accepted in French classicist circles). Not only does Foucault not consider the authenticity of *Letter 7*, he also does not raise the question of its literary form. While the *Seventh Letter* is standardly considered in the context of Plato's complicated relationship to *logos* and *ergon* both, one might further probe its form as a letter.[30] As a letter to Dion's supporters, it might well be more than an account of Plato's relationship to Dion (now dead) and the father-son tyrants each named Dionysius. It might be an *apologia* or a stronger effort to whitewash Plato's reputation. At the very least, one might want to frame it in the context of Plato's other letters, or within the genre of ancient letter-writing (in which such letters were often semi-public and intended for circulation).

These absences reveal something crucial about Foucault's return to Antiquity: classics exist for him as "living historical fact" rather than as a discipline bound by scholarly conventions.[31] Foucault's reading of the *Letter* and other texts is motivated by his preoccupation with the

[29] That is not to say, of course, that these accounts are trivial or misguided. Miriam Leonard's *Athens in Paris* and Paul Allen Miller's *Postmodern Spiritual Practices* are excellent resources for scholars of antiquity and contemporary French thought alike. While reading Foucault's texts against those of Derrida and Lacan is illuminating, I disagree with Miller that there is strong biographical evidence to suggest that these intellectual affinities are motivated by personal interactions. I am not convinced that Foucault's work in 1982–83 is a motivated extension of his earlier critique of Derrida from 1972 and their acrimonious dispute of 1963. Likewise, I am not persuaded that the "affinities" between Foucault's work and that of Lacan stems from an over-looked intellectual friendship. And while Foucault saw a therapist for a few weeks in 1948 after a depressive period, he was not "analyzed," as Miller claims. See David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 28–9; Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 26.

[30] See John Muir, *Life and Letters in the Ancient Greek World* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[31] Nicole Loraux's introduction to *Antiquities* (New York: The New Press, 2001).

difficulties besetting truth-telling and self-governance in the contemporary world. If efforts to think beyond the desiring and confessional subject have stalled, then a study of these thematics in the ancient world might reveal those relations, habits, and practices that have become so thoroughly naturalized as to be all but invisible. In reading Foucault's late lectures on these lines, I follow Peter Euben when he writes that "the challenge… is to be irrelevant so one can become relevant in a way that does not mimic the fashion of one's time."[32] One might read Foucault's late work as an opportunity (for ourselves as much as Foucault) to experiment with different conceptions of agency, authorship, and truth-telling whose genesis seems thwarted by a contemporary politics over-wrought and under-cut by power. In writing about "practices of the self" and self-knowledge in texts that arguably lack a comparable equivalent either to the modern self, or to the doubt that prompts the modern reflexive turn, Foucault "confronts our inherited and hereditary nature without our knowledge, and, through a new stern discipline, combats our inborn heritage, and implant[s] in ourselves a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature."[33] As Euben notes, such a response requires distance and proximity both. Where Freud's "new stern discipline" balances physical proximity against the fantastical distance of the unconscious, Foucault plays with distance and proximity both in his "method" of writing historical fictions – to make the unfamiliar close, and to distance us from the habitual – and in the dynamics of *parrhesia*. Where these dynamics seek to broach personal interaction and impersonal cultural norm, Foucault heightens the anxiety surrounding these dynamics, however, by nesting them in a series of hermeneutic relationships – between *parrhesiastes* and student, between Foucault and his live lecture audience, between my author-position and readers. These nested relationships effectively short-circuit the questions of historical accuracy – they are for "this time and these readers" even as time and place change – and instead oblige us to read these lectures as presented: for us.

Foucault's interest in the *Seventh Letter* is thus more intimate and proximal. He reaches for a frame that might just as well characterize post-Vichy France: Plato's "double disappointment," or the utter failure

[32] Peter Euben, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of Hellenic Studies for Political and Theoretical Life," in *Platonic Noise* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 18.

[33] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantage of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76. Also cited in Euben, "Uses and Disadvantages," 17.

[34] *GS*, 215ff.

of governance in Plato's experience with oligarchy and democracy.[34] Foucault argues that these have made political action all but impossible because of the absence of two crucial components: friends and opportunities (*kairoi*). The terms on which Foucault describes friendship are interesting,[35] if only because he does not elaborate this into a discussion of *philia* or *eros*.[36] Instead, Foucault reads the *Letter*'s introductory paragraphs (325d) as suggesting that "in a badly governed city, the personal relationships of friendship, the bonds which can join men together and form them into pressure groups, so to speak, thanks to which and through which one could win power and guide the city, are no longer possible."[37] The *parrhesia* that Foucault had characterized as political in his earlier reading of Euripides now "is no longer the exercise of moral or social ascendancy of some over others."[38] It is to be found in philosophy instead. Philosophy may not serve as an external source of doctrine, but "truth-telling in the field of politics can well and truly only be philosophical truth-telling."[39]

Where initially Foucault's readings seem flat-footed and literal, they can now be more clearly read in light of Foucault's own preoccupations with the impersonality and fixity of modern politics. Foucault's framework changes the reading of the *Seventh Letter* (as well as the other Platonic texts that Foucault cites: the *Phaedrus, Laches, Gorgias,* and the *Alcibiades*) in two ways. First, it makes the conditions for subject-

[35] In interviews, Foucault consistently expresses surprise when others suggest he spend more time on *eros*, friendship, or desire. Foucault repeats this sentiment at the second of two lectures given at the University of Toronto in 1982. Documented on p. 15 of an original typescript corrected by Foucault, held at IMEC in folder D 243: Conférences à l'Université de Toronto.

[36] In *Fragility of Goodness*, Martha Nussbaum casts the relationship as an erotic one and cites verse written by Diogenes Laertius (3.30). *Fragility of Goodness*, 230. Those interested in Foucault and familiar with the first three volumes of *History of Sexuality* have likewise sought to read these lectures through "gay friendship" or erotics. The most well-known is David Halperin's *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Lynne Huffer expands Halperin's interest in explicitly sexual practices to a broader definition of *eros*. She defines eros as "the name we can give to an ethical practice of embodied subjectivity in relation to truth … eros is both ancient and always changing," (138). The over-expansiveness of Huffer's definition, and her quick dismissal of Foucault's claims that he's not intellectually interested in sex, leave her argument unpersuasive. Huffer, "Foucault's Ethical Ars Erotica," *SubStance* 120, 33.3: 125–45.

[37] *GS*, 216. Foucault returns to the question of friendship and trust (in reference to 332c) two weeks later; see *GS* 263ff.

[38] *GS*, 217.

[39] *GS*, 217.

formation foremost in reading these dialogues. And, while *Gorgias*, the *Seventh Letter*, and *Laches* are often read as variously engaging the philosopher's role in politics or the conditions for moral education, Foucault insists on these conditions as social. That is, the direction of moral education responds in no small part to the conditions – for trust and truth-telling – in which it unfolds. Second, the educative relationship depends not just on the good intentions of its participants or their ability to bring *logos* to bear on *ergon*. It relies on relations far more profound and contextual, ones that gain traction even in a broader context of suspicion and distance. Foucault's primary attention to a *parrhesia* that he insists lies outside of politics suggests that its practices can rely neither on democratic institutions nor on usual social norms of trust for stability.

Just as Socrates asks in the *Gorgias,* Foucault considers why anyone would choose such an education (either as teacher or student). And, again, the answer both skirts and suggests more than classical scholarship: Foucault equates Plato's *self-constitution* as author of the *Republic* with his personal authority in addressing Dionysius. Foucault explains, "For Plato, it is clear that to be no more than the philosopher who is the author of the Republic … is to be no more than *logos*. To be more than just 'hollow words,' he must take part in and put his hand directly to action (*ergon*)."[40] Foucault clarifies the idea that philosophy cannot just be an "apprenticeship" and application of knowledge; it must be lived. Plato's role as *author* pushes him forward into politics, and provides a partial justification for his authoritative intervention.

Capacity for authorship thus seems to ground a very different kind of authoritative speech and political engagement than are usually associated with Foucault. If the authorial capacity for *ethos* portends an entrée into the field of politics, then *parrhesia* seems less a quietistic retreat than the adoption of a new perspective onto "the political game as a field of experience with its rules and normativity."[41] It offers insight into the experiences of contest and uncertainty that accompany governance. And indeed Foucault reads *parrhesia* as captured neither by these relations of power nor by formal juridical organization (*politeia*). Instead, Foucault analyzes *parrhesia* as that space "which serves as the hinge between *politeia* and *dunasteia*, between the problem of the law and the constitution

[40] Although Foucault reads passages in the *Letter* against passages from the *Republic*, he falls short of saying that Plato sought to implement the *Republic*'s lessons in Syracuse. *GS*, 218–19.

[41] *GS*, 159.

[42] *GS*, 159.

on the one hand and the problem of the political game on the other."[42] The practices constitutive of this intermediate space are "the root of a problematic of a society's immanent power relations which, unlike the juridical-institutional system of that society, ensure that it is actually governed."[43] Existing within a context structured by relations of power, *parrhesia* engages power at the level of practices. Both its siting and dynamics recall psychoanalysis; indeed, Foucault's turn away from a broad political economy of power echoes Freud's removal of the doctor/patient couple from the moral economy of the clinic.[44] For this organization of political experience to shift from one of power to authority, however, would require its dynamics and speech to change.

More than rational persuasion, parrhesiastic speech must incite trust where suspicion reigns. Where early modern governmentality emphasizes the pragmatic effect of speech, Foucault finds in *parrhesia* a "dramatics of true discourse" in which subjects "have a way of binding themselves as subjects to the truth of what they say."[45] *Parrhesia* stages and so attests to an individual's relation to truth and the political field that enables or constrains this relationship. Its dramatics consists "in the very act of this assertion, [through which] one constitutes oneself as the person who tells the truth, who has told the truth, and who recognizes oneself in and as the person who has told the truth."[46] Much would seem to hang on how one "binds oneself" to truth. In the cases of Plato mentioned earlier, Foucault emphasizes less the content of his claims or their rationality than the authorial investments that oblige Plato to live them. *Parrhesia* would seem to offer a different relationship to truth than to other dramatics, such as "the prophet, the seer, the philosopher, the scientist."[47]

[43] *GS*, 159.

[44] To the general reader, the difference might be slight. Research into the organization of clinics and the production of case reports re-reads the stakes of the move. Early clinics were organized to mimic the social hierarchies of the everyday world. Doctors rarely came into personal contact with their patients. Instead, servants – chosen for their moral strength of character – shuttled between the world of the clinic and the world of medicine. The famous nineteenth-century psychiatrist Charcot, for example, rarely treated patients himself. Jan Goldstein, "The Case History in Historical Perspective: Nanette Leroux and Emmy von N." in *Storms in her Head*, ed. Muriel Dimen and Adrienne Harris (New York: Other Press, 2001). The notable exception here is the case of Nanette Leroux, a nineteenth-century ecstatic (earlier term for 'hysteria'), who had frequent contact with her treating physicians and was involved in the writing of her own case history. Jan Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[45] *GS*, 69.

[46] *GS*, 68.

[47] *GS*, 69.

Specifically, the authority of a parrhesiastic speaker derives not from the speaker's appeal to religion, wisdom, reason, or science as either moral doctrines or epistemologies. It is not evaluated in terms of utility. Instead, persons would seem to author their words by authoring themselves. Parrhesiastic practices search out "chance opportunities" both in a strategic intervention into the political field as well as in a political dramatics that can sustain such speech. Unusually, they bring self- and political governance to bear on one another. And this effect is accomplished through a turn to the rough-and-tumble of politics (*la politique*) rather than political order (*le politique*).[48]

These claims are now rather distant from Plato and the ancient world and suggest instead that Foucault turns to the ancients to overcome a blind spot in contemporary practices. This blind spot has two features. First, it conceals modern individuals' inability to conceive of a self-formation that unfolds in relation to something other than law or desire. Ancient texts recount a different set of practices of the self (where law and desire are present, I would add, but not determinate). And, second, this blind spot leaves moderns unaware of how that formation could be one organized "from below." The salient feature of these texts lies less in their prescriptive content than in their account of the circulation between roles of teacher and student. Rather than molding political governance on a static ideal of the self-governing individual, the *education for* self-governance conveys those "practices of uncertainty" that bear on guiding others through this process and on governance itself.

In the next section, and with this framework in mind, I will chart the model for self-governance that Foucault imposes across a wide variety of texts. For the sake of clarity, I will develop this model through an extended reading of the *Seventh Letter*. Even so, it is worth cautioning that Foucault does not take the *Seventh Letter*, or any other text, as paradigmatic either of *parrhesia* or "practices of the self" broadly speaking. His lectures at the Collège de France are unusual for skipping about chronologically – his reading of *Gorgias* leads to a discussion of early Christianity, for example – and Foucault reads Plato as an important shift in practices of frank speech away from a speech constitutive of politics

[48] Foucault introduces the distinction between *le politique* (political order) and *la politique*. This distinction was significant in France for calling attention to the difference between statecraft and public policy. Foucault's innovation is to valorize attention to policy and political practices, on the grounds that they capture the real action of political contest. *GS*, 159.

and one, contestably, identified with philosophy. I will say more about the re-siting of *parrhesia* outside of politics in the next section.

## Constructing the Ethical Practices of *Parrhesia* in Plato

One of the most prominent examples Foucault gives of *parrhesia* is an example of its failure. Plato's voyage to Syracuse to speak with the tyrant Dionysius II provides an instructive illustration of these practices' structure, or what Foucault terms the "parrhesiastic game" (*le jeu parrhésiastique*).[49] As Foucault retells Plato's account from the *Seventh Letter*, Plato makes three visits to Syracuse. His second visit comes at the specific behest of his student, Dion, who is a relative of Dionysius's.[50] Dion writes to Plato and urges him to join Dion in working to educate the new tyrant so as to establish under his jurisdiction "a true and happy life without the massacres and deaths and the other evils." Although Plato doubts that the

[49] Foucault treats this encounter as presented in *Letter 7* from Plato's *Letters*. See *GS*, 209–19; see also *CT*, 61–2.

[50] In these lectures, Foucault gives no attention to the possibility that the *Seventh Letter* was written by someone other than Plato, nor to the rhetorical context from which the Letter originates. Instead, he concentrates on the text as a relatively straightforward "report" and the corroborative story told by Plutarch. The effect is to emphasize Plato's mission to "cure Sicily of all her maladies" and the harmony sought between Plato's own words and deeds; it creates a Plato perhaps more activist than the historical record indicates. For more on this point, see Malcolm Schofield's "Plato and Practical Politics" in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 293–302. Where French classicists tend to accept *Letters 6, 7,* and *8* as genuine, American scholars disagree. These questions of authenticity are discussed in Brunt, "Plato's Academy and Politics," *Studies in Greek History and Thought*, 314–32. Julia Annas disputes the *Letter*'s authenticity but calls for more discussion of it separate from these questions of authenticity. Julia Annas, "Politics in Plato's Republic: His and Ours," *Apeiron: a Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*, 303–26: 324 n48. Robert Brumbaugh defends the *Letter*'s authenticity on the grounds of stylistic features of its literary form in "Digression and Dialogue: The *Seventh Letter* and Plato's Literary Form," in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles Griswold (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 84–92. Kenneth Sayre re-reads Plato's (spoken) dialogues in light of the *Letter*'s status as a written document; see "Plato's Dialogues in Light of the *Seventh Letter*," also in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*. Sara Monoson offers a thorough, crisp overview of each of these scholarly disputes, as well as a reconstruction of the historical episode, in *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 145–53.

[51] Scholars dispute what exactly Plato sought to accomplish in Syracuse. Ultimately I agree with Monoson's conclusion that "*Letter 7* involves a familiar Socratic issue – the sort of life an individual will choose. […] [Plato's] efforts were likely aimed at the moral education of the ruler. Others such as James Klagge have claimed that Plato went to Sicily

young ruler could be convinced to abandon the brutal politics associated with the tyrant's father, Dionysius II has indicated an interest in hearing Plato's comments on mastery and self-mastery, and Plato senses a possible opportunity.[51] And so Plato sails for Syracuse. Some time later – after efforts of philosophic engagement, many court intrigues against Plato, and finally much diffidence from Dionysius about this philosophic project – Dion falls out of favor with Dionysius, and the whole experiment quickly ends with Plato's hasty departure for Athens. Plato embarks on a third trip some ten years later with equally disastrous results.

Foucault turns to the *Letter* as a resource to schematize the practices that sustain political engagement and distinguish them from polemics or simple adhesion to political program. As in this example, the first movement of *parrhesia* – the search (*recherche*) for a speaker considered as truthful – raises the question of power. The conditions of *parrhesia* include an asymmetry of power; yet, for Dionysius to trust that Plato speaks truthfully rather than out of fear, self-interest, or from a desire to flatter, the relationship must be structured so as to demonstrate the truth-teller's independent position. The second movement concerns the subsequent testing (*épreuve*) of the truth-teller's authority. Foucault invokes conditions of risk and indeterminacy to test the strength of the truth-teller's claims and the conviction behind those claims; since these conditions affect both audience and speaker, the audience's engagement must also be active so as not to proceed to a pre-determined end. Risk also deepens the psychology of the engagement; since the ends of *parrhesia* are indeterminate, risk plays on the hopes and fears of Plato and Dionysius. The third movement of *parrhesia* concerns the affective nature of the relationship of care (*souci*) binding the participants and its formative effects. In the Syracuse example, *parrhesia* breaks down at this point; unable to tolerate Plato's frank words, Dionysius detains Plato at length during both his second and third visits before finally permitting him to leave.

*Letter Seven* is not, however, an example of speaking truth to power. Indeed, the effect of these three movements – movements not signaled in Plato's text – should be to complicate Plato's position and the dynamics of his encounter with Dionysius. Foucault imposes these on his interpretations so as to engage the contemporary suspicion that trust and truth-telling are no longer available, and instead to propose a means to trust

in order to apply the political program of the *Republic*. This claim has been widely disputed, by Glenn Morrow in *Studies in the Platonic Epistles*, and by Brunt in "Plato and Practical Politics."

even in conditions of risk. Plato's meeting with Dionysius serves as a kind of limit-example; it is an example that marks those conditions that must be minimally present to hazard a parrhesiastic encounter.

### *Searching Out a Speaker*

In reading ethical self-governance against either a suspicion of rhetoric or from a lack of social trust, Foucault must redefine the position from which an authority might speak and the qualities such a figure brings to bear on his words. That Plato's interactions with Dionysius occur beyond the reach of democratic institutions suggests two points. First, that these practices seek to cultivate trust and truth-telling even where these are not institutionally sustained. And, second, Foucault moves to think through an engagement not over-determined by *democratic* institutions.

In stipulating the roles that a *parrhesiastes* might occupy, Foucault distances himself from those most characteristic of modern society: professions, legal status, and citizenship. Foucault notes that the *parrhesiastes* may or may not be a philosopher by profession; he may head a philosophic school (like Seneca, for example), or his insight might be grounded in age or disposition. He could be a pedagogue, a personal friend, a lover – or in exceptional cases, all three, as in the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades. The *parrhesiastes* might be a guide for someone who has not yet matured (*qui n'ait pas encore atteint sa maturité*) or who has not yet become master of himself. In addition to borrowing from the entangled contexts of pedagogy and political counsel, *parrhesia* might also bear on medical practice, since it advises adherence to a life-regime that touches soul and body both.[52] But most importantly, their coincidence is not guaranteed by institutional status. Foucault insists:

> The *parrhesiastes* is not a professional, and *parrhesia* is something completely different from a technique or a profession, even if there are technical aspects to the practice of *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia* isn't a profession, it is something more difficult to pin down: it's an attitude, a manner of being that develops out of virtue.[53]

[52] *GS*, 263ff.

[53] *Le Courage de la vérité*, February 1, 1984, CD 1A. The published version reads: "The *parrhesiast* is not a professional. And *parrhesia* is after all something other than a technique or a skill, although it has technical aspects. *Parrhesia* is not a skill; it is something which is harder to define. It is a stance, a way of being which is akin to a virtue, a mode of action." See *CT*, 14.

Unlike the modern expert, the truth-teller lacks the insulation and support of surrounding political and professional institutions. A counsel off to the side of formal politics, *parrhesia* exists in its own "intermediate space" in a siting that recalls psychoanalytic practice. And yet *parrhesia* lacks any therapeutic orientation. Rather than offering a containing context in which to combat self-disintegration, Foucault's *parrhesia* seeks to disrupt organizing concepts and categories.

The result is an asymmetrical relationship neither organized in relation to some external source (such as nature, culture, tradition, religion, etc.) nor driven by the asymmetry in power that separates its participants. Although tempting to read its asymmetries as speaking truth to power, such an interpretation mistakes Foucault's comment that "The *parrhesiastes* is always less powerful than the one with whom he speaks. The *parrhesia* comes from 'below,' as it were, and is directed toward 'above.'"[54] The claim that *parrhesia* "comes from 'below'" suggests that *parrhesia* might seize a moment betwixt power's production and reproduction so as to interrupt it – and ground the authority of that interruption on something other than negative dialectic. For such an interruption to occur, however, means that the vulnerable truth-teller needs to motivate his speech based on something *other* than vulnerability. Such an appeal would only reinforce power's jurisdiction.

That Foucault seeks a speech-activity orthogonal to usual political practice motivates his interest in philosophic *parrhesia* more than the political variant he associates with Pericles, Euripides' Ion and the historical Socrates.[55] His reasoning initially seems opaque. Around the first half of the fourth century, stipulates Foucault, there was a shift of *parrhesia* away from the explicit arena of politics to what he terms a philosophic *parrhesia*. Sometimes the shift appears historical;[56] sometimes Foucault cites Plato as the person who effected it.[57] Foucault's emphasis on philosophic *parrhesia* is puzzling for two reasons. First, it seems to deflate the political effect of *parrhesia*. And, second, it suggests a shockingly ahistorical approach to concepts. Indeed, Sara Monoson recovers this

[54] See Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 2001), 18.

[55] Foucault writes, "we can put this form of *parrhesia* under the sign, symbol, or mark of Pericles. Let's call this, if you like, the Periclean moment of *parrhesia*." Foucault situates this moment in the second half of the fifth century. The Platonic moment he situates in the first half, "even right at the start" of the fourth century. *GS*, 340.

[56] As in *GS*, 340.

[57] As in *Fearless Speech*, 22–4.

[58] Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 161.

conceptual bleed to argue that "Plato subtly manipulates [*parrhesia*'s] patriotic, political associations to illuminate the relation of this democratic practice to philosophy, as well as to engage his readers in thinking about how far a devotion to this democratic ideal will lead one, gently, to interest in philosophy."[58] Monoson's concern has broadened into an effort to assimilate what Foucault terms philosophic *parrhesia* to political speech broadly speaking. Part of the confusion here stems from the uneven publication of Foucault's lectures. In *The Government of Self and Others*, published after Monoson's own book, Foucault clarifies:

> I do not mean at all – and we must be very clear about this – that *parresia*, truth-telling, disappeared from the field of politics. […] The parrhesiast who now appears is no longer the man who, as a citizen, has the same rights … as every other citizen, that is to say, the right to speak… The parrhesiast is now someone else with a different profile, a different character. […] This substitution, or rather this doubling of the political parrhesiast, who is a citizen in the forefront of the others, by the philosopher, who is a citizen like the others, speaking the same language as everyone else, but aside from the others, appears to be another aspect of the same transformation…[59]

I cite this passage at length to underscore a salient aspect of the parrhesiastic relationship. First, Foucault concentrates his attention precisely on those relationships and practices that are *not* constitutive of politics. Such a move is necessary in order for Foucault (and myself) to claim that these relationships are not immediately bound up in the reproductive nature of modern power. Second, Foucault uses this simultaneous distance from formal politics and proximity to one's interlocutor to ground the *parrhesiastes's* claim to *ethos*.

As a double to political obligation, *parrhesia* becomes an obligation one bears to oneself, absent any reinforcement from political context; while *parrhesia* can occur in a democracy, in a monarchy, or in a dictatorship, it cannot be compelled.[60] So when Plato visits the tyrant Dionysius, he does so neither as an ambassador of Athens nor from any

[59] *GS*, 341. I cite this passage at length not to chastise Monoson – which would be unfair both to the publication dates that created this confusion, as well as to her extraordinarily subtle and sensitive reading of Plato. Ironically, this passage (and specifically the reference to "doubling") strengthens Monoson's claim that Plato's work must be read as balancing an exploration of Athenian civic image against Plato's philosophic critique of democracy. Monoson's engagement with Foucault on the two kinds of *parrhesia* has been widely cited and repeated in subsequent scholarship; it is a discrepancy well worthy of further discussion.

[60] *GS*, 104–7.

[61] *GS*, 218–219.

tug of political obligation to Athens or Dionysius. Plato's motivations are complex and, as Foucault notes, best understood in terms of Plato's identity and relation to himself.[61] Plato is reluctant to betray the trust that his student Dion has in him, feels compelled to bring his philosophic claims (*logos*) to bear on his own actions (*ergon*), and believes Dionysius might be open to the challenge – each of these assessments a personal one. Thus, *parrhesia* is a duty only in the sense that through frank speaking, the *parrhesiastes* works to maintain specific relations to himself and to truthfulness that are constitutive of his own identity. In contrast to the prophet (who speaks in the name of destiny or the future), or the sage (who speaks in the name of an absolute truth), the *parrhesiastes* takes personal responsibility for his words.[62] The ethical disposition required to use *parrhesia*, then, draws on the speaker's capacities to bear alone the burden of speaking truthfully. To counter the heroic cast of these qualities, in subsequent lectures Foucault leans heavily on the figure of Diogenes, whom he terms the "anti-king," and is arguably the hard case for this model.[63] Although Diogenes made the most of his talent for scandal, his public demeanor was steadfast (in the sense of relentless in the pursuit of asceticism), discrete (in terms of assiduously matching scandalous act to unconsidered norm), and courageous (in the sense of being indifferent to ridicule). Admittedly, however, Diogenes pushes the boundaries of what can be considered *parrhesia*; indeed, his teachings critique the limits of social convention.

By stripping the *parrhesiastes* of the authoritative support of office, community, and procedure, Foucault already emphasizes the need to

[62] *CT*, 15–16.

[63] *CT,* 275ff.

[64] Scholars of ancient political theory have variously criticized Foucault for granting too great a capacity for personal liberty to the *parrhesiastes* and his interlocutors. They argue that Foucault's treatment of subjectivity in the ancient world does not consider that individuals are conceived as part of a whole – that is, individuals are thought of in terms of their place within the *polis*, within an order of truth, or as those who organize their conduct along more general principles of beauty and order. Pierre Hadot's critique is more radical in that he argues that not only does Foucault wrongly interpret the place for liberty and subjectivity in the ancient texts he consults, but that his attempts to develop an "aesthetics of existence" via *parrhesia* and the care of the self amount to no more than another version of nineteenth-century dandyism. In response to these important critiques (and following Bernard Williams), I would argue that Foucault is less concerned with truth itself than with dispositions to truth-telling. Although ancients would use different criteria from moderns by which to evaluate truth-tellers, that such criteria exist should allow Foucault some latitude on this point. See Jean-François Pradeau, "Le sujet ancient et l'éthique moderne" (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002); Pierre Hadot, *La philosophie comme manière de vivre*, 215; Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*.

establish – and not simply affirm – his authority. Lacking the habits and predictability provided by institutional interaction, *parrhesia* draws instead on the dispositional qualities of the truth-teller; these qualities must serve as an adequate substitute for the authorizing function of political office or profession. Foucault grants – perhaps unfairly[64] – a measure of autonomy to both the *parrhesiastes* and, as we will see in the next section, to his interlocutor, only to make their engagement with one another the test and validation of this independence. Somewhat paradoxically, this dangerous encounter intensifies the affective bond between *parrhesiastes* and audience, and ultimately transforms it into a relationship of trust.

### *Testing the Truth-Teller*

How might a parrhesiastic audience test the claims of a truth-teller and so develop its own capacity for self-governance? Once again, Foucault steps beyond procedure and turns to risk. Initially, risk helps to establish the *parrhesiastes*'s truthfulness and authority by further minimizing the possibility of motivations based in self-interest; later, it marks those moments sited at the nexus between contest and violence, be they psychic or political. Here again, Foucault breaks from a more familiar interpretive lens that organizes readings of ancient texts. While it has become common to characterize Platonic dialogues in terms of contestatory speech (as in the *Gorgias*), or to frame contemporary politics as comprised of agonistic contests, Foucault resists the moral judgments that patrols the boundary between contest and violence. So, where ancient eristics hit their mark as much because of their shaming qualities as their logic, and where agonistic democracy relies on some kind of "agonistic respect" for the political game, Foucault instead refashions the dynamic of contest. Eschewing the language of shame, he emphasizes that truth-tellers "test and be tested" (rather than "examine and be examined"). I argue instead that Foucault's parrhesiastic test emphasizes an exchange of roles – that it be read in contradistinction to Christian confession.

Foucault develops the first component of this test – audience engagement – by placing the power of interrogation into the hands of the audience. In notable contrast to modern "confessional speech," parrhesiastic truth-telling reverses the roles of speakers and listeners; rather than the disciple's confessing to the master and thereby shaping the narrative of himself to the master's imagined wishes, the *parrhesiastes* primarily speaks under interrogation from his audience. Other commentators have

[65] *GS*, 53–7.

missed the effect on the audience. The audience neither plays the part of naive, childlike listeners nor of an impassive, silent other; instead, it actively presses the speaker to justify the reasons behind his speech. It retains the right to be unconvinced – and persuasion is not the goal of the *parrhesiastes*.[65]

By so arming the participants – Foucault explicitly names cynical *parrhesia* as an "armature for life" – Foucault begins to rehabilitate the risk inherent in any asymmetric encounter. Risk in the parrhesiastic game does not signal the potential for abuse of power but rather the potential for ethical development.[66] Much as in psychoanalysis, such risks must touch on both parties. While the *parrhesiastes* must have courage to speak the truth, his interlocutor (be it the Assembly or a single person) must be willing to play the supporting role, be willing to hear the truth knowing that it might be hurtful for opinion (as with the Assembly), for passions and interests (in the case of the Prince), or for one's blindness and ignorance (in the case of the individual). Foucault states conclusively, "So, in two words, *parrhesia* is the courage of truth in the person who speaks and who, regardless of everything, takes the risk of telling the whole truth that he thinks, but it is also the interlocutor's courage in agreeing to accept the hurtful truth that he hears."[67] The resulting parrhesiastic game varies slightly across the different contexts that Foucault considers. With Diogenes, *parrhesia* takes the form of scandalous, public provocation; with Socrates, it is a particular sort of interaction concentrated in individual exchanges. In *The Government of Self and Others* especially, Foucault insists: "It will therefore take the form of a joust, of rivalry, and confrontation,"[68] and opens it up to violence. Absent the insulation of institutional role or formal status, the risk is to socio-political existence. The *parrhesiastes* must face:

> [a] risk which concerns his relationship with the person to whom he is speaking. For there to be *parrhesia*, in speaking the truth one must open up, establish and confront the risk of offending the other person, of irritating him, of making him angry and provoking him to conduct which may even be extremely violent. So is the truth subject to risk of violence.[69]

[66] Foucault expands, "From the moment that this speech-act constitutes an irruptive element that opens up around the speaker an undefined or badly defined risk, from that moment on one can say it is *parrhesia*" (*GS*, 63). Foucault contrasts *parrhesia* to performative speech-acts of the sort discussed by John Searle. Where such performatives sustain institutional codes, implicit or explicit, *parrhesia* breaks with these codes and opens up a field (*champ*) of possibility and danger. *GS,* 61–66.

[67] *CT*, 13.

[68] *GS*, 174.

[69] *CT*, 11.

Here, the *parrhesiastes* risks his friendship, his relationship, his standing, and occasionally his life with the words he speaks. Initially this risk attests to his sincerity; as the game progresses, it grows increasingly volatile and pushes both the *parrhesiastes* and his audience to examine the limits of their claims. With such extreme indeterminacy or contingency of outcome, *parrhesia* runs the risk of utter failure – as with Plato and Dionysius – and the transgression of the parrhesiastic game's limits through violence. These other considerations allow the initial claim about risk – that it attests to sincerity of the speaker – to be revisited. While risk attests to personal sincerity, it also redirects both speakers beyond personal qualities to contest a shared and settled order; without the possibility of over-extension beyond the game's limits, significant change cannot occur.

In contrast to later Enlightenment projects of subject-formation, however, neither the truth claims nor the self-examination that result from this engagement will set either participant free. Rather than its purity of soul's leading to a liberatory truth, Foucault's model valorizes the *process* of struggle over truthfulness, in the form of curiosity, combat, courage, endurance, and resolve.[70] Freedom is something to be exercised rather than attained: "In *parrhesia*, the speaker *uses* his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy."[71] In particular, *parrhesia* demands that the speaker use his freedom not to sway another but to risk a declarative statement of his own – a statement that tests the boundaries of the game's rules rather than reproducing those rules and his own authority. Only then can the interlocutor trust that the *parrhesiastes* is not speaking the soft words of flattery or self-interest. And only then can the interlocutor trust the *parrhesiastes* enough to allow his words to influence, care for, and ultimately transform himself.

### *The Care that Binds*

With the previous two movements of *parrhesia*, I have shown how Foucault leverages *parrhesia*'s dynamics into the parameters for an

[70] These qualities constitute the mirror opposite of those associated with Foucault's discussion of *Unmündigkeit* in Kant's *What is Enlightenment?*

[71] Emphasis added. See *Fearless Speech*, 19–20.

[72] *Parrhesia* differently casts the "care of the self" presented in the third volume of *History of Sexuality*. That volume focuses more narrowly on sexual ethics and subjectivity rather than on subject-formation under the care of an authority. No mention of *parrhesia* occurs in this volume.

exchange supported by the barest of conventions. For such challenges not to be abusive, they must be sustained by deeper affective ties. In the final movement of *parrhesia*, Foucault seeks a relationship of care to replace the affective ties that initially bound the *parrhesiastes* to his audience.[72] Here, Plato's second trip to Syracuse is instructive for its abrupt, nearly violent conclusion. Not only does Dionysius's wrath prevent the parrhesiastic game from reaching its final stage, it also shows up the limits of the kind of care at stake.

To capture the psychic bonds of *parrhesia* while also transvaluing what might otherwise seem to be another confessional technology, Foucault borrows the term "*psychagogie*" from Pierre Hadot.[73] *Psychagogie* is a relationship based both on intellectual and affective affinity that gives pedagogy an emotional texture that ranges from "*bienveillance*"[74] to friendship to eroticism. Through *psychagogie*, the initial affective tie binding the *parrhesiastes* and his interlocutor becomes transformed into a more substantive relationship of care. This emotional texture is both a precondition for any subject-formation, as well as another means to distinguish *parrhesia* from self-interested rhetoric and flattery. It also allows Foucault to distinguish *psychagogues* from their "*mauvais doubles*" (evil doubles), the "professorial analysts" who mistakenly seek the "*libération*" or the "*désalienation*" of their students – a liberatory project that recalls those Enlightenment accounts of subject-formation that, in Foucault's view, produce rather than educate individuals.[75]

Foucault carefully composes a different emotional tenor for the parrhesiastic guides, or *psychagogues*, who speak less *for* others than *with* others. The relationship generated through the parrhesiastic joust can best be assessed by contrasting this struggle to the different stages of confessional speech. Foucault describes confession as a ritual with

> [an] authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile; […] a ritual in which the expression alone … produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it; it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation.[76]

[73] See *GS,* 306ff.

[74] Foucault's use of "*bienveillance*" is an interesting choice, since it is a cognate with the "*surveillance*" that Foucault associates with modern expertise. See *GS,* 365.

[75] Foucault develops this description of the "professorial analyst" at a lecture given at Berkeley entitled "Discourse and Repression," May 8, 1975, on file at l'Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine, dossier D 246.

[76] See Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, volume 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 61–2.

The emphasis in this description is on ritual – on a type of speech governed by a familiar, regular procedure, cadence, and order and one imbued with appropriate gravity. In addition to the regulated flow of speech, the emotional tenor of the confession also proceeds along set lines, through judgment, punishment, forgiveness, consolation, and reconciliation. In confession there is a forced shattering and then reparation of the bond linking confessor to subject; its existence is threatened and called into question in the judging and punishing phase, there is a period of relenting as the subject is forgiven, and then the relation is reconstructed (and the confessor's authority reconfirmed) through a phase of consolation and reconciliation. The experience of confession only reinforces the penitent's dependence on the confessor despite the apparent promise of liberation. Confessor and penitent bond through the shared experience of trauma.

*Parrhesia* builds a relationship in exactly the opposite manner. Where confessional speech moves ritually to a predictable end – producing the feeling of determinacy and discipline characteristic of normalization – the end of the parrhesiastic game is not fixed in advance. As a result, *parrhesia* differently calls on the hopes and fears of the participants.[77] Gradually, *logos* comes into play as the *parrhesiastes* is obliged to justify, or to give reason (*donner raison*), for his words – and then presses his audience to do the same. Effectively, the emotional bond gradually becomes redirected away from the personality (and personal authority) of the *parrhesiastes* and toward truthfulness and the development of a truthful life (*une vraie vie*). The wary trust built through confrontation between *parrhesiastes* and audience now binds both parties in a mutual concern for truthfulness; their deep intellectual and emotional investments – rather than the pull of professional or political obligation – undergirds this concern and thus ensures that the ensuing work on the self is voluntary rather than coercive.

### *Truth-Telling and the Form of a Life*

Foucault comes to refer to the cumulative process of parrhesiastic practice as giving shape to one's life, as an aesthetics of existence, as a style.

[77] Where David Owen likens this affective engagement to Stanley Cavell's reading of re-marriage comedies, I am less convinced. The preceding sections of this chapter methodically erased other motivations of interest, desire, power, and so on. Since marriage relationships historically have a complex entanglement with political, social, and economic advancement, for this association of *parrhesia* and perfectionism to hold would require grappling with how these marriage relationships are gendered and sexed within the context of each film.

Foucault claims it "was at the center, it seems to me, of moral experience and the moral will in Antiquity" and constitutes a morality which "essentially seeks out (*recherche*) a personal ethics [rather than] a morality that is obedience to a system of rules."[78] Scholars have interpreted these claims in different ways. Pierre Hadot has condemned this style as a narcissistic return to the dandy.[79] Others, such as Paul Veyne, have contextualized "style" in the ancient world as evoking an artisanship or *mise en forme*.[80] Hadot misses the extension of his own claim that "in this literary genre … it is extremely difficult to distinguish between a symbolic enactment and an account of a historical event."[81] Recognizing that conceptual and literary structures are deeply bound, Hadot analyzes the formative effects of literary genre on these distinctions. Differently from Hadot, Foucault turns to the social conditions that organize the play between form and content. The *parrhesiastes* is invited to give an account of this relationship, and to situate it socially – in a field organized by relations to self, others, truth – and so to comment on his role as producer. Students and audience are called upon to participate in this staging (or not, in case of Dionysius II) and to judge its effect. Such deliberate staging brings explicit attention to the application of norm. Participants are always at once identifying resemblances (between words and deeds, times past and present, oneself and others), even as the concurrent claim to ethical excellence constructs social hierarchies to organize the differences between these social groupings.

Although a few have found this aesthetics to refuse ethics entirely,[82] more recently it has been taken as a counter to procedural ethics and seen to offer something akin to a virtue ethics.[83] Many, though not all, have developed the ethics of *parrhesia* through reference to Wittgenstein and those "forms of life" in which language and practice meld. Owen, for

[78] See "Une esthétique de l'existence," in *Dits et Ecrits* II (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1550–51.

[79] Pierre Hadot, *La philosophie comme manière de vivre*, 214–215.

[80] Paul Veyne, "The Final Foucault and his Ethics," trans. Catherine Porter and Arnold Davidson, *Critical Inquiry* 20.1 (Autumn 1993): 1–9.

[81] Hadot, "Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse," in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 52.

[82] Hayden White, "Foucault's Discourse: The Historiography of Anti-Humanism," in *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, ed. Barry Smart (New York: Routledge, 1994), 48–76.

[83] From the beginning, Arnold Davidson has argued this point the most forcefully. See Arnold Davidson, "Structures and Strategies of Discourse," and "Introductory Remarks to Pierre Hadot," in *Foucault and his Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). See also "Spiritual Exercises and Ancient Philosophy: An Introduction to Pierre Hadot," in *Critical Inquiry* 16.3 (Spring 1990): 475–82.

example, reads Foucault alongside Stanley Cavell's perfectionism to find that "moral perfectionism, like the ethics of care of the self, addresses 'what used to be called the state of one's soul' in that it is specifically concerned with one's intelligibility to oneself as a (moral) agent."[84] It shares with Cavell a commitment to the Nietzschean activity of "becoming what one is" – to conceive of self-formation as an ongoing process of struggle in a post-Christian world.[85] For such work to be more than introspection requires contact with a truth beyond solipsism.

While I agree that Foucault's late work has clear resonances with Wittgenstein (and the extension of his thought by Stanley Cavell), I would argue that Foucault's deliberate attention to *parrhesia*'s social conditions gives it more ethical bite. The critical power of a Wittgensteinian approach lies in its resolute redescription – in its ability to cull a descriptive account of the processes by which an ethics is *lived*, often in contradistinction to its stated principles. Such an approach refuses the prescriptive power sought by a generalizing ethics, while also measuring the distance between principle and enactment, what one might call (following Cavell and Emerson) the "unattained but attainable self."[86] Foucault's attention to social conditions holds onto this critical power while also attending to the social hierarchies created around truth-telling practices. *Parrhesia* becomes a way to understand how, for whom, and by what criteria certain claims become authoritative, and certain cultural figures come to have authority. Parrhesiastic speech becomes more than the verbal expression of pre-authorized claims or position. As I will argue at greater length in Chapter 7, it is the canny ability to intervene not just in the framing of claim and authorization but also in their figuration.

Toward the end of his life, Foucault remarked to Paul Veyne that "the great question… according to Wittgenstein, it was to know what one was saying when one spoke the truth; but in my opinion… the question is: how is it that there is so little truth in truth?"[87] Foucault's comment foregrounds the social conditions that certify truth even as they permit a psychology of suspicion to dominate contemporary life. The dependence

[84] Owen, David, and Clare M. Woodford, "Foucault, Cavell and the Government of Self and Others: On Truth-Telling, Friendship and an Ethics of Democracy," *Iride* 66.2 (May–August 2012): 299–316.

[85] Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), xxxiv. Cited also in Owen and Woodford, "Foucault, Cavell, and the Government of Self."

[86] Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome*, 8.

[87] Veyne, "The Final Foucault," 8fn1.

he identifies extends beyond a dependence on "social judges" to dependence on those narrative forms that figure ethical existence. In turning to the ancient world, Foucault seeks to decouple these two dependencies so as to inject greater agency into ethics and truth-telling. The next two sections will evaluate how successfully Foucault's *parrhesia* mitigates these dependencies.

### Psychagogues and Their *Mauvais Doubles*

By reading such varied models of subject-formation against one another, Foucault presents a proliferation of alternate relations to self, others, and truth-telling. He thus opens up conceptual and ethical space for rethinking the third set of relations – relations to others – on the terms of what remains an undefined "care" rather than knowledge. Foucault explicitly contrasts the *parrhesiastes* to other paradigmatic figures of authority – the soul-director, the military officer, the author – first enumerated in Kant's account of Enlightenment tutelage, although others have since contributed their own candidates: Lenin's revolutionary, Weber's ascetic, and Rorty's strong poet, to name a few.[88] All of these figures face the challenge of defending their claim to authority and of addressing the paradox of how, as authorities, they could possibly promote self-governance in another. In the *parrhesiastes* and his interlocutor, Foucault finds what he terms a "prehistory" of those practices that come to be organized around other "famous couples": the penitent and his confessor, the directed (*dirigé*) and the director of conscience, the sick and the psychiatrist, and the patient and the psychoanalyst.[89] These figures are bound together by their perceived cultural salience; individuals turn to these figures to ask some variant of the question "what is to be done?" Where, according to Foucault, the modern expert responded by saying "decipher thyself," the *parrhesiastes* responds provisionally "care for yourself" – and then expects his audience to continue posing questions about practices in ethical living. The ultimate goal of the parrhesiastic game is not the establishment of unchanging truth, but the elaboration of a life lived in relation to truth.

[88] Such is the comparison in *The Government of Self and Others*. In *Courage of the Truth*, during a discussion of cynicism, Foucault compares the cynical *parrhesiastes* to the religious ascetic, the nineteenth-century model of the revolutionary, and the modern artist. See *CT,* 164–5, 172–173, 181–186, 188–89, 210–11.

[89] *CT,* 7.

With the *psychagogue*, Foucault recalls and significantly refashions the figure of the Kantian guardian found in *What is Enlightenment?* Such an interpretive claim becomes more plausible when one learns that the introduction to the *parrhesia* lectures exclusively treats that essay as well as the second essay in Kant's *Contest of the Faculties*. That Foucault should develop such a careful reading of Kant – and particularly on the issue of subjectivity – is itself surprising. After all, Kant remains the implicit target of *The Order of Things*, a book that finishes with Foucault's claiming that soon "man will erase himself, like a figure traced in the sand at the edge of the sea."[90] As others have noted,[91] however, Foucault's relation to Kant on issues of truth and subjectivity is far more complicated than a simple antipathy; in this instance, Foucault's self-proclaimed "fetish" essays on *Aufklärung* serve as the touchstone for his work on ethics and *parrhesia*. The *psychagogue* appears to satisfy Foucault's stated desire in this lecture to find an *Ausgang* or a "way out" – a way out of the authority relations that promise false liberation, out of the entanglements of a universal subject, and out of the circularity of the power/knowledge dynamic.

The intuition that drives many of these accounts of subject-formation is that individuals, although ethically unformed, possess some amount of inchoate self-direction. Although society may yet struggle with the yoke of self-imposed immaturity (as says Kant), from alienation from the means of production (Lenin), or from a rationalized politics (Weber), individuals are thought to be sufficiently strong to choose their exemplars well. On this point, Foucault is more dubious. While he begins – in *Birth of the Clinic* and even earlier in *The History of Madness* – by examining how marginal figures are construed as "sick," he finishes – in *Discipline and Punish*, along with *History of Sexuality*, volume 1 – by finding all of us sick after a fashion. The remaining scope for political action is then limited to a localized politics of resistance at best; even then, the terms of political agency remain unspecified. The situation in *Discipline and Punish* is such that, according to Foucault, individuals suffer from continuous normalization – a constant low-grade fever, if you will – that

[90] *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 398.

[91] For an extended discussion of Foucault's relation to Kant, see Amy Allen, "Foucault and Enlightenment: A Critical Reappraisal," in *Constellations* 10. 2 (2003): 180–196. See also Jürgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present" in *Critique and Power*, ed. Michael Kelly; Christopher Norris, "'What is Enlightenment?': Kant According to Foucault," in *Reconstructing Foucault: Essays in the Wake of the 80s*, ed. Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso and Silvia Caporale-Bizzini (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994); Miguel Morey, "On Michel Foucault's Philosophical Style," in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 117–27.

precludes the possibility for a crisis or disjuncture to change this situation and allow for things to be otherwise.

The appeal of these ancient models lies in their move away from, first, clear assertions of expertise that allows, second, the division between body and soul to offer a different form of self-governance. Moving away from Platonic and Christian frameworks of desire, Foucault turns to Galen, Seneca, and Epictetus for frameworks that trouble the usual division of body and soul.[92] Foucault's work to efface the division between internal and external will be addressed in the next chapter. For now I want to concentrate on the different experience of governance offered by these personal relationships. Where previously medicine, politics, and knowledge conjoined in the treatment of populations, the practices of *parrhesia* take shape ("*prennent corps*" – literally, take on bodily form) in such a way that they allow the individual soul to be transformed.[93] Health, for both educator and student, becomes a problem of self-constitution rather than adjustment to a norm. Self-governance reflects how both participants bring different domains to bear on one another and fashions these into an ethics. Rather than deferring to the governance of others, one governs oneself. These same interactions extend the activity of governance outward to community. By experiencing the risk of *parrhesia* and the possibility of hurt, one learns the technique of evaluation – evaluation of others and of circumstances more broadly – and one learns how and under what conditions to generate relations of trust.[94] Foucault thus mobilizes the earlier intuition that individuals must have some ethical resources to fall back on as they undertake these projects in conditions of uncertainty, and then articulates this intuition into a dynamic set of practices between two people.

With *parrhesia*, Foucault seeks to replace relations of obedience with those of self-governance and trust. He accomplishes this end by making the suspicion of authority differently productive – productive by testing and establishing figures of authority (rather than re-affirming them) and

[92] For more extended readings on this point, see Peter N. Singer, *Galen: Selected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxxviff; Paul Veyne, *Seneca, The Life of a Stoic*, trans. David Sullivan (New York: Routledge, 2003), 46–81; A. A. Long, *Stoic Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Catherine Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[93] *CT*, 64–65.

[94] *Parrhesia* reverses the process outlined in *Discipline and Punish*; technologies of the self regain their visceral impact on the body and soul, suggesting that categories of fear and hurt should not be understood uniquely in terms of their negative effect on individual subjects.

productive by building relations of trust (rather than strengthening tendencies toward dependency). Ideally, such self-governance should generate the resources for an altogether different ethical or political regime. Rather than encouraging the alienation of judgment, the *parrhesiastes*'s role

> may be presented metaphorically and even manifest itself and take shape as a sort of medical practice, since it is a question of taking care of the soul and of fixing a regimen (*régime*) of life, which includes, of course, the regimen (*régime*) of passions, but also the dietary regimen (*régime alimentaire*), and the mode of life in all its aspects.[95]

Through the metaphoric association of personal regimen and political regime, *parrhesia* more clearly exists at the intersection of self and order, of political activity and juridical institutions, of *dunasteia* and *politeia*.[96] It stages a dramatics rather than a tutelage. Much as Nietzsche defends aesthetic judgment, no concept or first principle serves to ground judgments of a *parrhesiastes*; instead, his merit arises (again as in Nietzsche and Kant), through performance.[97] Interpreters of Nietzsche, and most notably James Conant and David Owen, have seized on this performance as one that "cannot be set up as a standard *external* to the exercise of that agency, and so cannot be chafed against."[98] And yet the parrhesiastic model radicalizes Nietzsche's own efforts to ensure that "following after" someone is not the same as blind imitation. Nietzsche, for example, is forever vulnerable to skepticism that a reader could choose an exemplar sufficiently able to provoke substantive change – the kind that enables a person to give birth to "a dancing star" – that is, to something so new as to appear utterly foreign to who one is presently. And so parrhesiastic practices heighten what

[95] Through use of the word "*régime*" – which in French variously means "system of governance," "diet," and "rate of activity" – Foucault knits together issues in governance and self-governance with issues in medicine, psychology, and pedagogy. See *CT,* 6.

[96] *GS*, 159–60.

[97] Nietzsche heeds Kant's claim that aesthetic judgment is not "determinable according to concepts. Rather must the rule [of art] be gathered from the performance, i.e. from the product, which others may use to put their own talent to the test, so as to let it serve as a model, not for imitation but for following." Note the change in sense in the new Cambridge translation: "Rather, the rule must be abstracted from the deed, i.e. from the product, against which others may test their own talent, letting it serve them as a model not for copying but for imitation," *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 188.

[98] The quotation is from Nietzsche, cited in David Owen, "Perfectionism, Parrhesia, and the Care of the Self," in *The Claim of Community*, ed. Andrew Norris (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 140–1.

[99] A. A. Long, "Why Seneca Now?" in *Seneca and the Self*.

Anthony Long calls the "interlocutionary force" of such exchanges.[99] These practices are more obviously interactive and enduring than the model culled from Nietzsche. The *parrhesiastes* must present a diagnosis of the patient's sickness, convince the patient of the urgency of the problem, and then, by way of healing, rethink the patient's *régime* alongside of him. Just as the *parrhesiastes* speaks from a mix of logical and affective claims, so must his patient mobilize a range of physiological responses, affects, and principles of self-mastery in his response. Exemplarity alone cannot sustain such engagement and its far-reaching effects.

Key to this collaborative ethos is giving substance and weight to a relational politics that, for contemporary political theorists, is often more gestural than material. For all that Foucault claims power to be diffuse and productive, Foucauldian scholarship lapses quite readily into a framework in which power is manipulated by some kind of repressive force. So much is apparent in a November 1980 interview with the *Daily Californian*.[100] When confronted with the bald example of a child scribbling on the walls of a house and the question "At what point does one say, 'That's enough!'" Foucault responds: "If I accepted the picture of power that is frequently adopted, namely, that it's something horrible and repressive for the individual, it's clear that preventing a child from scribbling on the walls would be an unbearable tyranny." He continues, less expectedly, to say, "But that's not it: I say that power is a relation. A relation in which one guides the behavior of others. And there's no reason why this manner of guiding the behavior of others should not ultimately have results which are positive, valuable, interesting, and so on. If I had a kid, I assure you he would not write on the walls – or if he did, it would be against my will. The very idea!" The challenge, then, ought be to think through the organization of such relations such that they come to alter the nature and potential of subjectivity, the collective experience of relations of power, and the knowledge used to evaluate both.

The context for such relationships matters. To invoke David Owen's work once again, Owen rightly notes that these relationships cannot take law as a point of reference; to do so would be to invite law to re-enter

[100] "Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual." Interview with Michael Bess, Department of History at UC Berkeley, San Francisco, CA. November 3, 1980. Held at IMEC, cote B.53 / FCL2 A02–06.

[101] Owen cites Bernauer and Mahon, who argue that "The greatest support for the psychoanalytic project as a normative discipline is the notion that sexuality is the index of one's subjectivity, of one's true self" ("Foucault's Ethical Imagination," 158). Owen is correct to note that Cavell's reliance on psychoanalysis needs justification. David

into processes of subjectivation. They also cannot be relations governed by desire – and here Owen's hesitancy to draw on psychoanalysis further underscores my own turn away from desire and towards a relational interpretation of clinical practice.[101] I diverge from Owen, however, when he (following Stanley Cavell) suggests that the democratic friendship illustrated in Hollywood re-marriage comedies might offer such a relational context. These relationships – much like the Nietzschean exemplar or Emersonian friend – organize a movement between one's present and possible selves, a movement whose value comes from the changes risked along the way. Significantly, however, the formal organization of these relationships affects their ethical content. Either these relationships lack ethical bite and disarm rather than provoke. Or, their formal organization (e.g., around the heteronormative institution of marriage) veers once again toward conceptions of law and desire associated with juridical sovereignty.[102] Parrhesiastic relationships build on their Nietzschean heritage while loosening their attachment to late modern cultural order.

The critical will retort that *parrhesia* does not clearly eliminate the uncertainty that besets us upon finishing *Discipline and Punish*. This counterclaim is entirely true: *parrhesia* does not provide a clear-cut set of rules to determine in which instances truthfulness and authority are indubitably present and in which instances they are not. Foucault's *parrhesia* does provide a more specific account of what steps or practices are necessary to evaluate and assess practices of and claims to truth-telling. And it does so without requiring the audience to have more or better access to truth, without requiring them to have any specialized knowledge, and without requiring that they be in a position to trump the claims of the speaker. The assessments that participants generate will necessarily be limited. They will be able to determine whether the speaker's words and actions correspond and whether the speaker displays those qualities that, at that particular time and for that particular society, should be

Owen, "Perfectionism, Parrhesia, and the Care of the Self," in *The Claim of Community*. In his essay that follows, Cavell also appeals to the shared therapeutic projects of Emerson and Wittgenstein. Building on my reading of psychoanalysis in Chapters 2 and 3, I will consider the compatibility of psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices in Chapters 6 and 7.

[102] Cavell addresses these relationships in *Pursuits of Happiness* and *Cities of Words*. Owen reads Foucault's Plutarch against Cavell's analysis of *The Philadelphia Story* to analogize parrhesiastic practice and moral perfectionism. Owen argues that the comparison "underscores the point that coming to see Dexter as a true friend leads Tracy to acknowledge the truth of the rebukes that he has directed to her (e.g., that she was a scold rather than a helpmeet with respect to his drinking when they were married) and to change her relationship to herself…" (144).

considered emblematic of truthfulness. Ultimately, however, this process allows the audience to cultivate and exercise skepticism toward authority with confidence. It finishes with an enabling self-cultivation and trust rather than a disabling paralysis and dependency.

### Risking Liberal Political Order

The second dependency that Foucault identifies with liberalism is a dependence on the power-laden conceptual and institutional frameworks of liberal order itself. These frameworks (or forms) organize political community, both in the sense of distributing power along lines of hierarchy and in the sense of investing these distributions with meaning. The political salience of *parrhesia*'s ethical relationships depends in no small part on their ability to contest the forms of political order, and so move beyond politics' daily contests. If the psychagogic relationship seeks to disrupt individuals' relations to norm, then it further seeks to challenge this normative order itself. Foucault clearly views this project as a critical one;[103] when an interviewer asks if Foucault envisions these authority relations as a new "regulating principle" (*principe régulateur*) for politics, Foucault quickly corrects him by saying these relations can serve only as a "*principe critique*."[104] It challenges political order in a way quite different from other usual models of education found in neo-liberalism.

Although *parrhesia* is not limited to democracies, Foucault sees *parrhesia* as closely linked to the paradoxical place for risk in democracy and democratic institutions. *Parrhesia*'s risks challenge the very form of these institutions. Clearly Foucault's earlier work on biopolitics argues against risk as the management of danger through appeal either to an absolute or a prudential approach to action. But in advocating *parrhesia* as a "risky speech," Foucault offers more than a recuperation of either risk or robust free speech. To achieve *éclat*, the parrhesiastic speaker faces two potentially incompatible tasks: the first, to achieve a harmony between his words and deeds: the second, to speak truthfully. Risk enters

[103] See *GS*, 43ff; see also "Une esthétique de l'existence," in *Dits et Écrits* II (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1551–53.

[104] See "Politique et éthique: une interview," in *Dits et Écrits* II (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1406–09. And in the first lecture of *Government of the Self and Others*, Foucault aligns himself with a broad critical theory (that includes Habermas, the Frankfurt School, Nietzsche, and Weber) against analytic philosophy. *GS*, 21.

into this speech and validates it as these two goals conflict. It is easily mistaken as speaking truth to power – as speaking a risk that somehow is personally redemptive. But in saying that individuals are not obligated to risk life, Foucault clarifies that this risk is not a redemptive one that will validate certain choices in the name of a more just ideal. Potentially, the risk is something other than speaking up to corrupt institutions. After all, democratic institutions create a certain paradox. For

> there is no democracy without true discourse (*discours vrai*), for without true discourse it would perish; but the death of true discourse, the possibility of its death or of its reduction to silence is inscribed in democracy. No true discourse without democracy, but true discourse introduces difference into democracy. No democracy without true discourse, but democracy threatens the very existence of true discourse.[105]

Although democratic institutions preserve the right to free speech and extend this right to all citizens, this extension potentially blurs the distinction between different types of speech, or at least creates a lot of white noise.[106] More tendentiously, *parrhesia* risks the very idea of democracy itself – it challenges the commitment to the political forms of democratic discourse and politics themselves. Such a reading is not obviously Foucault's intent. It is, however, consonant with his abiding interest in the material forms of discourse, as well as the social institutions that shape conduct.

At this juncture, modern liberals often appeal to civic education, or to free speech and public debate, as the ethical preparation necessary to make these institutions and formal protections more ethically robust. Foucault's critique suggests that these activities now contribute

[105] *GS*, 184. Foucault's reference to "*discours vrai*" marks the cusp of truth-telling acquiring greater formal structure, a formal structure whose significance comes historically later: "True discourse and the emergence of true discourse underpins the process of governmentality. If democracy can be governed, it is because there is a true discourse." *Discours vrai* poses a peculiar paradox for democracy. On the one hand, democracy radicalizes the presence of difference within democratic institutions and practice; only democracy can guarantee that conflicting claims will be resolved through appeals to accuracy (rather than, say, strength, nobility, etc.). On the other hand, the crisis of evidence provoked by these multiple differences and discourses, will require democracy to assert one as indubitably true.

[106] Foucault clarifies that he does not want to argue against democracy, just against the equation of free speech with true speech. For an extended discussion on this point, see also Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*.

[107] Philosophers of education have likewise noted that education's political goal of robust consent is in tension with its philosophic aim of critique. By defining good citizens as those who ultimately support a specific polity, such theories risk collapsing the political and ethical aims of education. Eamonn Callan, *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Jon Coleman, "Civic Pedagogies and Liberal-Democratic Curricula," *Ethics* 108 (July 1998): 746–61.

to a political socialization that, to use liberal terms, reinforces consent rather than critique.[107] In contrast, *parrhesia* is far more disruptive of the status quo, and potentially destabilizing. *Parrhesiastes* do not seek to "fall back continually on the rights that they claim, on their legitimacy [...] privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question."[108] *Parrhesia* neither aims at persuasion (as does political deliberation) nor at ethical imperatives (which invoke maxims already legitimated). As such, both through its practice and its pedagogy, *parrhesia* challenges the usual framework for political deliberation; it cannot be read simply as a variant of participation in a public sphere.[109] In this sense, Foucault's contrast between *parrhesia* and modern liberalism charts the distance between modern appeals to the self-governance of autonomy and its practices, between the work entailed by education rather than tutelage, and to the ironies of theorizing iterated interactions premised on predictability – and naming these 'trust.' *Parrhesia* fits uneasily with many of the practices associated with liberal institutions, and indeed threatens them. In their aims, liberal political institutions emphasize security over risk for the pragmatic purpose of political survival and reproduction. Institutional theories of democracy are predicated on assumptions of political stability, tend not to question the normative rules of the "institutional game," and do not question the legitimacy of the individuals involved.[110] The trust produced here, however, differs qualitatively from that which interests Foucault in *parrhesia*.

[108] See "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, volume 1 (New York: The New Press, 1994), 113, 112.

[109] Hence I diverge from Amy Allen's efforts to square *parrhesia* with a Habermasian deliberation. Amy Allen, *The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[110] For example, see Douglass North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: Norton, 1981); Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

[111] To respond again to Monoson's critique of the distinction between political and philosophic *parrhesia*, I would argue that Foucault seeks to sharpen, not abandon, critique. Differently from Monoson, I do not read this distinction as Foucault's attempt to empty the political content from the term. Instead, I read him as distinguishing a political speech constitutive of subjects, from a philosophic speech that uses its distance from politics to challenge organizing political norms. Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, 159–61.

[112] Foucault notes that in the cases of Socrates and Plato, their role as *parrhesiastes* complicates their role as citizen. In such instances, when the political subject (*sujet gouvernant*) and the ethical subject (*sujet philosophant*) coincide, the emphasis should remain on subjectivity: "The question philosophy asks is not the question of politics; it is the question of the *subject* in politics." *GS*, 319.

Foucault dislodges these democratic habits of thought in two ways. First, he dissociates ethical education from constitutive political relations.[111] Obviously the two bear on one another – ethical subjects are also political ones.[112] This analytic disarticulation, however, seeks to leverage a tension between ethical and political practices so as to strengthen the potential for critique. For similar reasons, and second, Foucault seeks change, not constancy, through these projects of self-formation. His interest lies with those authorities who educate individuals to a process that is transformative and who will push individuals to challenge the patterns – the forms – that organize their thought and action.

Foucault's comments on security and dependency in the liberal state reflect this preoccupation with the forms of governance that organize existence. His earlier work on biopower generally claims that the initial liberal contract of security in exchange for political obligation over-insures citizens against risk and confrontation. The ancient ethical philosophies with which he works share a common concern for security – security in the face of necessity and the security of political community.[113] Concurrent with his research on *parrhesia*, Foucault continues his work on liberalism and marks the post-war twentieth century as a turning point in these issues of risk and security, broadly construed. In this work, he begins with the claim that, following the two world wars, governments sought to protect their citizens from various risks as a means to "win the peace." While noting that this concern for the precariousness of their citizens' lives was not unwarranted – post-World War II Europe faced any number of serious, material challenges linked to post-war reconstruction – Foucault states, "the problem of security was so acute and so immediate that the question of dependency was practically ignored."[114] As government sought to expand the social safety net and to redefine the provision of security from military to economic and social security,

[113] This concern for security, and its resulting concern for the confidence of individuals, can most easily be associated with Epicureanism; some consonance can also be found in Stoicism, although the Stoics do not advocate the same withdrawal from political life. For an overview of these debates, see Malcolm Schofield's "Epicurean and Stoic Political Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 435–456. For more on the theme of security as it relates to political and ethical philosophy, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[114] See "The Risks of Security" in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–84*, ed. James Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: The New Press, 2000), 366.

[115] Following the deadly heat wave of August 2003, a number of political actors called for the addition of a fifth pillar: protection from natural disaster. These appeals – usually

the limits and nature of this expansion were left unconsidered, claims Foucault. In France, for example, Social Security was explicitly defined as a means to insure French citizens against four distinct types of risk: unemployment, sickness, old age, and accidents.[115] In the United States, Foucault finds that the state "was incorporating into the social whole a new form of government that located risks and disabilities and distributed their costs within the population. […] The art of government (of a workforce, of a society) began to incorporate techniques for reducing and distributing "social" costs into its methods for economic productivity."[116] Although these policies are legitimate in their aim to provide social protection – and Foucault is quick to clarify that he does not advocate a "savage liberalism" in which risk is entirely privatized[117] – they provide this security at the expense of some measure of dependency.[118]

At first glance, Foucault's analysis of risk would seem more obviously political than that of Freud's. However, Foucault's own inability to clearly distinguish the moral risk of ethical engagement from neo-liberalism's narrow attention to the material risks managed through liability, underscores the claim I argued in Chapter 3. Namely, that our language for ethical relations of care has become impoverished and that the relationships on which we presently rely have become inordinately muddled. Initially, Foucault struggles to make the incorporeal, material. As with psychoanalysis, *parrhesia* seeks to hold onto the play of symbolic enactment and structuring convention. Where something like Freud's therapeutics might have tempered Foucault's allergy to all relations of dependency, Foucault can only see these as furthering the reach of the neoliberal state. That

accompanied with a condemnation of the Raffarin government for its slow response to the crisis – were met with mixed reception from the broader public.

[116] See "New Arts of Government in the Great War and Post-war Periods," research proposal submitted to Berkeley in 1984 with Keith Gandal, co-author. On file at IMEC, dossier E.1.29/FCL2 A04–06.

[117] As such, his work remains apart from his former assistant at the Collège de France, François Ewald, who re-reads Foucault to develop a school of "insurance theory" (*des nouvelles théories assurantielles*). Ewald argues that the social insurance of the sort provided by a welfare state is the sole remaining link binding individual to collective; individuals are practically and materially linked through the management of collective risks. As such, Ewald might be read as part of the neo-conservative, entrepreneurial response to 1968 that began around 1983 and that gained greater force following the election of Jacques Chirac in 1995. See François Ewald and Denis Kessler, "Les noces du risque et de la politique," *Le Débat* 109, mars-avril 2000; François Ewald, *L'État providence* (Paris: Grasset, 1986); for an overview on this period, see François Cusset's, *French Theory* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003), 347ff.

[118] See "The Risks of Security" in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–84*, ed. James Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: The New Press, 2000), 378.

the state might ever be the site or instrument of a polis "acting in concert" is not available to Foucault. This is not immediately a problem. For their part, many ancient thinkers struggled to move more familiar political conceptions of "rule" into the psychology of self-governance. Plato's *Republic*, for example, invoked the *polis* as a model for the crafting of the soul. Foucault's steps and missteps teach that the modern predicament is the opposite. We now seek to move a more plastic conception of self and responsiveness into the politics of governance. Foucault innovates by using what Freud would call the transference relationship to enable individuals to prepare themselves by drawing on what they know best – personal relationships – so as to introduce them *into* politics. But Foucault thus finds himself caught in an unusual bind. Clearly he rejects the liberal-individualist ethical framework – he caustically condemns tolerance for reinforcing dependency[119] – but just as clearly he cannot simply raze the political institutions that would secure any modern variant of *parrhesia*. Instead, Foucault seeks to leverage the parrhesiastic relationship into one that might prepare individuals for a more uncertain political context. If psychoanalysis addresses uncertainty by creating a protectively containing context, then Foucault turns to *parrhesia* for the opposite effect: to radicalize uncertainties, but in a manner that is still underwritten by relations of care. The Pythian responsibility displaced onto modern persons requires both a wary suspicion of putative claims to expertise and an ability to allow oneself to be open enough, vulnerable enough, to trust others. Foucault manages the first. In refusing to admit to the articulacy of the unconscious, however, he loses sight of those psychoanalytic enactments that speak without prior authorization and whose speech forms the authorial ground of those claims not yet legitimated. The weakness, however, of the parrhesiastic relationship lies in its psychologically and substantively thin conceptions of care.

[119] In Foucault's discussion of Aristotle, he notes that Aristotle remains unable to attribute any distinct ethical virtue to democracy; no matter how well-designed its laws, democracy will be undermined by virtue: "In short, when, with Aristotle, an attempt is made to give the best possible justification for the laws and rules of democracy, we see that democracy can give only one place to moral excellence, a place which itself embodies the refusal of democracy. If there really is someone virtuous, let democracy disappear and let men obey this man of virtue, this man of ethical excellence, like a King." See *CT*, 52.

# 5

# The Authorial Subject

## In Resistance to Orthopaedy

Are parrhesiastic practices – distinct as they are from discursive practices or biopolitical technologies – enough to overcome the paralysis that Foucault associates with modern political subjects? The radical force of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality, vol. 1* lies in the haunting unease that individuals unwittingly replicate the very structures that are the limits on their claims to self-hood. Disciplining technologies and pressures of normalization secure and over-stabilize both power and personhood. Other scholars have since tempered the productive coherence of disciplinary techniques to make the radical critique that irruptions in the functioning of power are possible only at its points of reproduction. Yet if agency is pried away from any strong sense of self, then the only political engagement possible is resistance from within the field of power. Across these readings, a lingering fear remains – namely, that even an imperfectly coherent normalization leaves us with no better options than simply muddling through, and tacking endlessly between the Scylla of universals and the Charybdis of particularity. Even those unpersuaded by Foucault's argument in *Discipline and Punish* feel stymied by the seeming inability of individuals to discover and assert normative principles by which to act. Authorship and authority have no place in such a world.

Foucault's reading of *parrhesia* allows him to step to the side of the political and epistemological impasses of *Discipline and Punish*. The ancient world permits Foucault to recover a precarity muffled in a modern world so over-insulated against risk. For the ancients, the challenge

(as described by Herodotus and retold by Anthony Long) was "to heed the following answer to the self-model question: The human being is entirely *sumphora* – which one could translate weakly by 'a creature of chance' but more tellingly by 'a disaster.'"[1] In such a context, individuals are defined not through injury but through their ability to bring vulnerability and agency to bear on one another. Pedagogical relationships of authority cultivate this capacity into something more sustained and ethically substantive. Where Chapter 4 argued that parrhesiastic relationships to authority carved out a space for trust and truth-telling amidst broader relations of power, this chapter examines the individual subject that results.

The parrhesiastic promise is that through a relationship to a truth-teller, students of *parrhesia* develop their own authorial capacities. With *parrhesia*, individuals become schooled in those techniques and practices that would enable them to direct and cultivate their activities that are at once a care of the self and a care for others. The appeal of *parrhesia* lies in its consistent focus on the present and the immediate (alternately: *le présent*, *le réel*, and *l'actualité*). Less a problem of epistemological uncertainty, the shakiness addressed by *parrhesia* is an inability to orient and steady oneself through one's relations to oneself, to others, and to truth-telling. The challenge, then, is for the techniques of *parrhesia* to develop these relations to oneself and to others into a different, steadier *manner* of being. For *parrhesia* to provide a model of ethical self-governance, however, these practices must be able to form coherent subjects without these relationships being ones of discipline and constraint, and without objectifying the individual into a "body of knowledge." *Parrhesia*'s paideic techniques must not become an orthopaedy.

Where earlier in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault had cast the modern crisis of authority as a collapse of self-and political governance into one another, he now seeks to pry these apart. To revisit this fragile link between self- and political governance, Foucault frames his Greco-roman foray in terms of Kant's practical writings – the *Anthropology*, *What is Enlightenment?*, and *The Conflict of the Faculties*. He writes with and against Kant: both take pedagogy and politics as the consistent point of departure for their work on the constitution of subjects.[2] The Kant to

[1] A. A. Long, "Ancient Philosophy's Hardest Question: What to make of Oneself?" in *Representations* 74 (Spring 2001): 19–36.

[2] In *Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant responds to Frederick William II (who chastised him for disparaging religious authority) by claiming he was a "teacher of the people" rather than a "teacher of youth" (Frederick's term). He frames this educative role as at once ethical and

whom he turns is not the one of contracts and promises, to be set against Greek agonism and tragedy, as did Nietzsche. Rather, Foucault's Kant is the figure who relates speech, authority, and dependency, and who recognizes that any "progress" will come at the expense of violent conflict. His fascination with Kant's political and pedagogical writings proceeds in the spirit of Kant's well-know epigram: "To have begun is to be half-done: dare to know." This epigram borrows from Horace's second *Epistle*, in which Horace urges an uncommitted youth to study philosophy.[3] For Horace, such study is a study of practical philosophy, drawn from the examples of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* rather than abstract metaphysics. It exhorts a philosophic life of the type that fascinated Foucault in his later years. Foucault's rereading of modernity as *l'actualité* (also the French term for 'the news') likewise emphasizes the practical currency of thought brought to bear on action.[4] Relations of speech, dependency, and authority are at once the "self-imposed yoke of immaturity" and the grounds from which individuals must give ethical content to political practices in freedom.

Against Kant, however, Foucault seeks the possibility for a different kind of modern subjectivity. From Foucault's lectures I cull an "expressive

political. Even in his own pedagogy, Kant recognizes that men occupy multiple roles, with multiple obligations, at a time. *Über Pädagogik* opens with the claim that "Man is the only creature that must be educated. By education we mean care (maintenance), discipline (training), and instruction, including culture. Man is thus babe, pupil, and scholar." The nature of humans' dependency depends on the relationship at hand. *Über Pädagogik* [Lecture-notes on Pedagogy], trans. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1904 [1803]), §1.

[3] The full verse reads:

> Will you not wake to keep yourself alive?
> Well, if you will not stir when sound, at last,
> When dropsical, you'll be for moving fast:
> Unless you light your lamp ere dawn and read
> Some wholesome book that high resolves may breed,
> You'll find your sleep go from you, and will toss
> Upon your pillow, envious, lovesick, cross.
> You lose no time in taking out a fly,
> Or straw, it may be, that torments your eye;
> Why, when a thing devours your mind, adjourn
> Till this day year all thought of the concern?
> Come now, have courage to be wise: begin:
> You're halfway over when you once plunge in:
>
> – Horace, *Epistles*, I, 2

[4] Foucault comes to the image of philosopher as diagnostician of the present, when he imagines the philosopher descending from the ivory tower to the street – and the self-imposed tradition of philosophic argument changing as a result. He imagines a philosophy "that would be able to define itself as the activity of describing what is 'today.'" Foucault, "La philosophie structuraliste permet à diagnostiquer ce qu'est 'aujourd'hui,'" in *DE* 1, 609. The translation is mine.

subjectivity." These practices of ethical self-governance prepare individuals for ethical subjectivity, prompt them toward political action, and find them in their relations to others rather than founding them on claims to knowledge. The practices of *parrhesia* thus offer an alternative *manner* of subject-formation and *mode* of truth-telling, one that initially appears to mimic the elements of subject-formation in *Discipline and Punish*. And yet the constituent structure of *parrhesia* is such that it accomplishes this task without fabricating a distinction between internal soul and external body, by creating not a "body of knowledge" but a "body of practices"; and without reference to an external order (such as nature, custom, tradition, religion). *Parrhesia* "educates," rather than "produces," individuals.

Expressive subjectivity offers a set of practices by which to move beyond the "epistemological grammar" of humanism and to strike out along what Foucault self-consciously calls "a different way."[5] Rather than beginning with individuals as divided between moral and political selves, Foucault instead examines the personal relationships that bind doer to deed and one person to another. Solitary individuals are not to be taken as starting points; the relations that bind them to one another are. In such a context, individuals are quite literally what they do; they achieve constancy and ethical excellence not by attaining to an ideal but by cultivating a "disposition to steadiness"[6] in an uneasy context lacking in absolute values. Where previous accounts advocating ethical responsibility leave responsibility to be a matter of heroic personality or tragic ethos, Foucault's lectures contribute a greater level of specificity to the practices in play, and soften the edge of impossibility. Contrary to the earlier concerns of Jürgen Habermas and other critics, *parrhesia*'s work on the self does not imply an aesthetic turn inward, nor does it turn to the human sciences to codify and reproduce any insight gained. Rather than a "knowing subject," produced in reference to a defined body of knowledge and some external order, the "expressive subject" draws on the structural dynamics of parrhesiastic relationships to give ethopoetic content to her actions. Rather than being urged to "dare to know," individuals are encouraged to "dare to act."

[5] The phrase "epistemological grammar" comes from David Owen's *Maturity and Modernity*, in which Owen reads Foucault's archaeological project against Kant. This grammar is composed of "rules of formation" that organize different configurations of knowledge and might be understood as a "historical *a priori*." Foucault's own language of "a different way" or a "way out" alludes to Kant's *Ausgang,* or exit, from immaturity. Foucault uses this language on approximately nine occasions in *The Government of Self and Others*.

[6] My phrasing "disposition to steadiness" resonates with the ancient term of *sophrosyne* as moderation. Interestingly, Foucault never examines this particular concept.

While the practices of *parrhesia* might also afford modern readers a different set of resources for rethinking existing practices of free speech, of democratic contestation, or of rhetorical persuasion, these are not the resources Foucault mobilizes.[7] Instead, Foucault's *parrhesia* schools would-be authors to critically reread and so rewrite these practices from within. Just as in his writings on the discourses of madness, sexuality, governmentality, and biopower, Foucault remains most interested in *parrhesia* as practices that condition the parameters of individual self-development. *Parrhesia* gains ethical and political salience because it outlines a set of concrete practices that school individuals in the arts of interpretive discretion required to make our partial understandings and particular claims politically and ethically robust. Where the ancient world, following Plato, sought to rework public relationships into a compelling sense of self and self-government, Foucault seeks the inverse. Building on the proleptic potential of Freudian enactments, Foucault's parrhesiastic practices seek to extend individuals out and into politics.

## Beyond Humanism and Choice

Where the earlier chapters on Freud situate him in the context of contemporary debates about power, desire and subjectivity, Foucault demands to be read differently. His own writing does not directly engage other scholars or contemporary work even as he is deeply immersed in debate with them. While it might be tempting to dismiss this indirection as the sociological tic of a peculiarly French exceptionalism, this indirection also is something more. Slowly, eventually, it comes to reflect the emergence of a public oriented to the historical question of the present. Unusually, the debates over historical approaches have opened beyond the French Academy to reach a broader reading audience.[8] The public readership approaches these texts

[7] Such are the approaches taken by Arlene Saxonhouse in *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Sara Monoson in *Plato's Democratic Entanglements* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Elizabeth Markovits, *The Politics of Sincerity: Plato, Frank Speech and Democratic Judgment* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2009); Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). Amy Allen seeks to reconcile Habermasian and Foucauldian approaches to power and critique. Although I agree that Foucault sought in his late work to revisit questions of power, agency, and critique, I disagree that these two approaches can be reconciled epistemologically or politically. *The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Theory* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[8] Veyne notes this peculiarity at a colloquium (the Deuxième Forum Le Monde Le Mans) convened between scholars and non-academics and entitled *Les grecs, les romains et*

motivated by political questions from their present, as well as with deep skepticism that these questions can be met with a definitive account of the "truth of the matter." In this section, then, I will situate Foucault in his own historical present, and attempt to distill broader theoretical questions about subjectivity and authorship from its conversational eddies.

In raising these questions of subjectivity and political action, Foucault at once draws on a rich heritage of politically oriented intellectuals – such as Émile Zola's publication of *J'accuse* in 1898 – and distances himself from the humanism associated with Jean-Paul Sartre. Following France's undistinguished experience with collaboration during World War Two, French post-war philosophy grappled with the theoretical foundations of the individual and the basis of his ethical responsibilities. Both philosophic and political debate were especially dominated by Sartre, who exercised influence not only through his courses for the students of l'École Normale Supérieure but also through his newspaper *Les Temps Modernes* and his political involvement with the Communist Party of France (PCF). Schooled in these debates and by Sartre's strong presence at l'École Normale Supérieure, Foucault backs away from its universalism. Indeed he claims, "What frightens me in humanism is that it presents a certain form of our ethics as a universal model worthy for any type of liberty. I think that our future contains more secrets, more possible liberties, and more inventions than humanism allows us to imagine in the dogmatic representation given it by the various groups on the political spectrum…"[9] Yet the problem Foucault identifies with humanism lies in the response it prompts in adherents; it encourages them toward a dogmatic filiation with a singular ethical vision rather than impelling them toward interpretive work. Such work might differently allow individuals to discriminate between a multiplicity of ethical models and relationships.

Even as Foucault's earliest writings avoid humanism by condemning it, his research consistently treats those themes – most notably, moral psychology, freedom, and truth – often associated with the political

*nous: l'Antiquité est-elle moderne?* [Greeks, Romans, and Us: Is Antiquity Modern?]. His remarks, and the conversation that ensued, were later published in the essay "Le renouveau de l'histoire ancienne prépare-t-il un nouveau siècle des Lumières?" in *Les grecs, les romains et nous*, ed. Roger-Pol Droit (Paris: Le Monde Éditions, 1991), 434–58. Veyne's new introduction to Seneca's *On the Tranquility of the Soul* – half as long as the original text, and ranging from Stoicism to René Char to the events of 1968 – is a case in point. Paul Veyne, "La medication interminable," in Seneca's *On the Tranquility of the Soul*, trans. Colette Lazam and René Waltz (Paris: Éditions Rivage, 1988), 7–62.

[9] See the 1982 interview: Michel Foucault, "Vérité, pouvoir, et soi," in *Dits et Écrits* II, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1601.

and philosophic projects of the Enlightenment.[10] Tellingly, rather than directly engaging these themes, critical responses to Foucault's published work have focused in large extent on how to read his books, and on the place they leave for political action; for some, these two issues are not necessarily distinct.[11] The commonalty across these responses is an uncertainty as to the grounds upon which to judge and evaluate his work, along with the sense that his work constituted an attack on those engaged in the "caring professions." When Georges Canguilhem states, "In Foucault's thesis, it is madness that is primarily at issue, not mental illness; it is exclusion, internment, and discipline that is primarily at issue, not asylum, assistance, and care,"[12] he means not that Foucault leaves the last set of issues untouched, but that Foucault inverts the terms on which these discussions are generally conducted. The result is not only to undercut the humanistic impulses attached to, in this case, mental illness, but also to disorient the academic reader habituated to a particular – and usually humanistic – frame of reference.[13] Some critics come close to asking whether Foucault's books are books at all. This disorientation is intentional; indeed, Foucault refused to write a preface to the second and third editions of *Madness and Civilization* on the grounds that such agenda-setting would oblige the reader "to consent to a 'declaration

[10] Alexander Hooke pursues Foucault's humanism in greater detail to argue that Foucault "believes in human values while rejecting modern humanism" (295). The limitation is that Foucault offers "another view of individuality" (300). "The Order of Others: Is Foucault's Antihumanism against Human Action?" in *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments (I)*, ed. Barry Smart (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1994): 284–301.

[11] One of the first such works is the seminal analysis of Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). For critical responses in the history of science, see Ian Hacking, "Michel Foucault's Immature Science," *Noûs*, 13. 1 (March 1979): 39–51; his "Two Kinds of 'New Historicism' for Philosophers," *New Literary History* 21. 2 (Winter 1990): 343–64; Georges Canguilhem, "On *Histoire de la folie* as an Event," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997). For a historicist response, see Paul Veyne, "Foucault Revolutionizes History," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*. On Foucault's public intellectual and private aesthetic practices, see "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy," *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992) and "What is Enlightenment?: Kant and Foucault," *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[12] Georges Canguilhem, "On *Histoire de la folie* as an Event," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 30.

[13] Foucault, "Human Nature: Justice versus Power," in *Foucault and his Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997). This well-known interview with Noam Chomsky provides the starkest example of such disorientation.

of tyranny.'"[14] Foucault thus writes not to disable ethical impulses but instead to provoke reflection on the interpretive framework invoked and the adequacy of any attempted response. Not only does Foucault himself refuse to play the part of the moralist – a position more willingly adopted by Sartre – but he also embeds himself and his reader into the interpretive context generated by his writing. Foucault mobilizes reading books into reading people.

The subjectivity that emerges in Foucault's work on *parrhesia* likewise is inflected by interpretive discretion. At the beginning of his work on the ancients, Foucault theorizes this interpretive move more explicitly as "the intent [...] not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to reveal the hidden, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already-said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read..."[15] Considered in light of these comments, Foucault's preoccupation with moral psychology, freedom, and truth is with these concepts as part of the modern "already-said" that gains political and ethical purchase through an interpretive working-through. The narrative occasioned by self-formation is not driven by an ethical ideal – it is not allegory – nor is it driven by the forward-moving, plot-based action of desire. Instead, it works with the ambiguous ethical resources already possessed by individuals, and leaves to them the final shaping of these resources into something more. Foucault's work thus strikes a nervy chord not just with the epistemological claims that intellectuals use to guide their work, but also with the ethical principles that drive their self-understanding as engaged intellectuals.

In its crudest formulation, Foucault's intellectual trajectory is away from a philosophic investigation of the humanist subject and toward the conditions of political possibility. Where in the investigations of the human sciences "man never found himself at the end of the destinies charted for mankind,"[16] political subjects have known a different history: "In the course of their history, men have never ceased to construct themselves [on their own], that is to say, to displace continuously their subjectivity, to constitute themselves in an infinite, multitudinous series of different subjectivities, and that will never end and never place us in front of something

[14] Canguilhem, "On *Histoire de la folie,*" 32. Foucault also had the original preface to the first edition removed from the new editions.

[15] Foucault, "Self Writing," *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, vol. 1 of *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–84*, ed. Paul Rabinow and trans. Robert Hurley (New York: The New Press, 1997), 211.

[16] See the 1978 "Entretien avec Michel Foucault" with D. Trombadori, in *DE* II, 894.

that would be Man."[17] Moving away from the "doubled" subject that characterizes Foucault's earlier work cannot, however, be a simple refusal to grant such a subject standing in his own work. And while the earlier work does suggest that individuals forsake a "legislative" model in which their claims to subjectivity extend to others, the later work differs from the "exemplary" model posited by David Owen. Such exemplarity captures the dilemma of the Foucauldian individual: that she must believe in certain values while accepting the impossibility of their realization.[18] The appeal to exemplarity, however, cannot account for Foucault's insistence on relationships irreducible to the persons involved. It also falters before the question of how an exemplary force might be sustained without succumbing to legislative ideal. Instead, Foucault shifts to personal relationships that embrace the imperative to *not* be governed that comes at the close of *What is Critique?* Persons take their starting point from the very asymmetries of these relationships, and rewrite them into a new context.

The subtleties of Foucault's ethical subjectivity premised in personal relationships and expressed through actions sustained over time are sharpened by their contrast to Jean-Paul Sartre's work on ethics and subjectivity. Sartre claims that the primary obstacle to morality is evasion, and turns to two concepts – "birth" and "desert" – to make such cowardice all but impossible. Sartre anchors the individual in the very "facticity" of his existence; the mere fact of being born into the world necessitates that individuals assume responsibility for it and for themselves.[19] Repeatedly, Sartre asserts that individuals "deserve" the world that they are born into; that is, they acquire moral obligations by acquiring a context or a world.[20] Although Sartre hopes to translate his commitments to the material conditions of "facticity" into a philosophic appreciation for the everyday, he fails adequately to problematize everyday relationships and their relation to the past. His account neglects the extent to which social relations rely on a conception of the past in order to make sense of actions undertaken

[17] Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *DE* II, 894.

[18] For a discussion of doubles in Foucault, and the distinction between legislative and exemplary projects, see David Owen, "Genealogy as Exemplary Critique," *Economy and Society* 24. 4 (November 1995): 489–506.

[19] Sartrian existentialism achieves its fullest elaboration in *Being and Nothingness*; a condensed version of these claims can be found in Jean-Paul Sartre, "Freedom and Responsibility" and "Existentialism is a Humanism" in *Essays in Existentialism* (New York: Citadel Press, 1993). For an excellent treatment of Sartre within the context of French post-war thought, see Sonia Kruks, *Situation and Human Experience: Freedom, Subjectivity, and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[20] Sartre, "Freedom and Responsibility," in *Essays*.

in the present. By making "birth" the origin of responsibility, Sartre implies a birth in which one must immediately claim oneself and one's context. Such a childhood-less conception of origins renders individuals dependent on themselves alone for guidance in facing up to their terrifying freedom and making the authentic choices that ethical living demands. Even in *Search for a Method,* when Sartre speaks in the language of "*praxis*, creation, invention"[21] and about those life projects that bind present and future together, these continue to lack firm anchorage in any past. Lacking an infancy, it is unclear how such individuals could form themselves or develop attachments to others such that in choosing a project for themselves, they could simultaneously choose for all others. The acontextual conception of "desert" does not allow us to make sense of our intuition that different people have different claims on us, or that our ethical responsibilities to others are not – and need not be – uniform. In seeking to protect humans' liberty, Sartre gives them a set of responsibilities – and so a sovereignty over themselves – so strong that they must strain the very social relations they shun. Such stoic heroism would seem to work against the development of any meaningful relationships of reciprocity.

In contrast, Foucault starts down what he self-consciously terms "another road."[22] Unlike Sartre, he cannot assume that a single act of existential choice is sufficient means – or the only means[23] – by which to govern oneself. That assumption of individual coherence is too great.[24] So Foucault must also ultimately refuse[25] the liberatory ethical project offered by something like Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*; desire remains a concept that is future-oriented, rather than genealogical, and becomes one governed by unending longing and lack.[26] For Foucault, such desire can only be relieved through the impetus to discourse and to

[21] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1968).

[22] The roots for this new formulation of philosophy's relationship to power emerge in an unscripted address given during Foucault's 1978 visit to Japan. See "La Philosophie analytique de la politique" in *DE II*, 540.

[23] Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: un aperçu du travail en cours," in *DE II*,1436.

[24] "Interview avec Michel Foucault" by I. Lindung, reprinted in *Dits et Écrits I* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2001), 687. Foucault consistently acknowledges his inheritance of the Freudian model of an unintegrated self.

[25] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley et al, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990 [1972]). Foucault writes an enthusiastic preface to *Anti-Oedipus* and situates it as an important new ethics.

[26] Gilles Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," in *Foucault and his Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 189.

greater knowledge in the hopes of catching up to one's beloved – so much is clear from the stinging account of Freudian psychoanalysis that opens *History of Sexuality 1*.

Foucault thus returns to the point he identifies in modern philosophy when the status of individuals could be critically engaged and taken as the starting point for investigation. He returns to Kant's claim that our immaturity is one that is "self-imposed."[27] In considering immaturity as self-imposed, Foucault turns to those personal relationships that could educate individuals to the variegated terrain of ethical responsibility.[28] While Kant's relationships to priests, doctors, and books are consistently glossed as ones of dependency, Foucault finds in *parrhesia* a resource for rethinking the interpretive education offered by the "messy middle" of those personal relationships as-yet unstructured by their endpoint and not predefined by their beginnings. Such relationships potentially offer a context in which the past can be problematized, the future left unforeclosed, and the present always ready-at-hand; they also provide a structure for the reconsideration of ethical obligations and responsibility; and they accomplish both of these tasks without recourse to the private terms of taste. With ancient ethics, Foucault finds a similar turn to personal relationships in order to rethink the link between ethical self-governance and political governance and to cultivate those practices and resources used not in agonistic contest,[29] but to develop constancy through one's own "daily régime." By considering individuals as embedded in a relational

[27] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Kant's Political Writings*, 2nd edition, ed. Hans Reiss and trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[28] Here my argument resonates with that of Romand Coles (who writes before the publication of Foucault's late lectures) in "Foucault's Dialogical Artistic Ethos," in *Theory, Culture, and Society* 8 (1991): 99–120. Reading Foucault in terms of Kant, Coles argues that Foucault's artistic ethos is one of "dwelling dialogically." In a compellingly lyrical prose, Coles claims that considering "the self as a work of art" is a means to stage an encounter with otherness. Coles emphasizes the artistry of Foucault's *ethos*; as I argued earlier, I find that the conceptual model of education more readily moves this *ethos* closer to politics.

[29] These lectures surprisingly imply a different relationship of modern politics and aesthetics to Christianity than what is often argued. Foucault draws on pre-Augustinian texts and argues that they lack the concern for self-purification that arises later; Diogenes, on his account, becomes a liminal figure whose practices teeter at the edge of those "technologies" that Foucault later attributes to the early Christians. Foucault can more readily claim, then, that the "aesthetics of existence" is not a turn toward the human and the individual away from the divine and metaphysical; it is not a version of nineteenth-century dandy-ism. Nor is it not simply a substitute for religion reliant on a secular "strategy of piety," to use Connolly's phrase. *Parrhesia* does not need Nietzschean agonism to

context, Foucault makes these relations constitutive of the horizon of ethical experience, their dynamics contributory to motivations for action, and their structural constancy sufficient to generate stable ethical norms binding one individual to another. The dynamics of certain personal relationships contain within them the resources to educate individuals to the arts of ruling and being ruled.

Where Foucault's previous books all began with a self-admittedly "dramaturgical" impulse, his first foray into self-formation in *The Use of Pleasure* opens not with spectacle but with its own turn, less of a turn inward than one toward self-assessment. As if to acknowledge the professional unsettling he has previously provoked in others, Foucault prepares his reader for his own professional re-orientation. This maneuver both acknowledges and acts out the background concern behind many explorations of self-development – the relation of such self-fashioning to philosophers, and their potential role in politics. By emphasizing the *manner* of being and the *mode* of truth-telling that is at stake, Foucault thus speaks to the problem he had earlier identified with humanism's insistence on singular models of truth-telling and liberty. His goal is to offer not an ethics of absolute values but a set of expressive practices independent of any appeal to the absolute values offered by nature, religion, tradition, sexual identity, or the human. Foucault's turn toward expressivity in his late lectures is in many ways a return to his initial concern for those structures that sustain significance, meaning, and expression.

## A Model for Ethical Self-Governance

However shocking a turn it was for Foucault's audience in 1981, Foucault's lectures on ancient ethics develop the "arts of government" in a very different manner from his earlier work in governmentality. Much though they appear to take up a very different set of texts and concerns, they offer a new "way in" to thinking about power relations that Foucault

fight against a (newly secular) "pagan enemy" because the identity of those who practice *parrhesia* does not rely on some concept of an "other." Although Foucault does not build this comparison, a contemporary politics in the spirit of *parrhesia* would look very different from a Nietzschean-inspired politics such as that elaborated by William Connolly. See *Identity\Difference* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991) and Tracy Strong's review in *Ethics* 102, no. 4 (July 1992): 863–65. For a different account of the relations between Nietzsche, practices of the self, and politics, see Tracy Strong's *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

had earlier sketched as "a sort of complex composed of men and things. The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned are in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate …"[30] These arts of government themselves are ineluctably and irreducibly articulated through relationships, making the parrhesiastic emphasis on relations less surprising. Less an aesthetic turn inward to quietism, these relationships are an effort to articulate a different kind of governance of "men in their relation to that other kind of thing": individuals as they relate to themselves, to others, to their environment. The ethical self-governance that results frames persons and subjectivity around a "disposition to steadiness." Such a disposition offers a set of specific practices and tactics by which to supersede the disciplining effects of governmentality. The "expressive subject" that ensues conceives of individuals in terms that do not set the soul over the body, that do not make the relationships of self-formation into techniques of discipline, and that do not result in a "knowing subject" developed in reference to a body of knowledge (*savoirs*).

### *Curiosity and Resolve*

The late modern conception of individuals as fundamentally divided against themselves not only seeks to capture a disjuncture between self and cultural order, but also to account for basic ethical motivations; their ontological and psychological make-up ineluctably compels self-reflexive individuals to face the demands of the day. Side-stepping this putative division, Foucault begins instead with basic human capacities to remark, describe, and remember, and concentrates on the effect provoked by their elaboration and externalization. In taking up the challenge of going neither deeper nor further "inside," Foucault notes that if the *parrhesiastes* is "really to take care of [others], he must go find them there where they are."[31] Foucault thus turns to two relatively unrefined capacities – curiosity and resolve[32] – as the means to work past the dependency provoked

[30] Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell and Colin Gordon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 93.

[31] *CT*, 278. The entire passage reads: "Caring for others is not just giving them lessons, through discourse or examples, which will enable them to conduct themselves; it is really taking care of them…"

[32] These basic characteristics find different formulations over the eight centuries that Foucault covers. For example, they find one expression in concepts of *eunomia* and another in Seneca's later use of *tranquilitas* and *fermitas*. See Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 142–160.

by ethical unease.[33] Foucault describes, in the example of Serenus, one of Seneca's students, that "[h]e does not know exactly what is the reason for his wavering, but he characterizes his *malaise* as a kind of perpetual vacillating motion which has no other movement than 'rocking.'" This malaise, "due to the instability, the unsteadiness of his mind," prevents him "from advancing towards the truth, towards steadiness, towards the ground."[34] In parrhesiastic practices – which range from ambulatory exercises, to writing, to meditation – the initial challenge is simply to retain a sense of curiosity toward one's suddenly unfamiliar experience, and to extend this curiosity into an understanding of different potential responses and their entailments.

In singular contrast to Foucault's earlier work, the emphasis on curiosity and resolve neither creates nor relies on a distinction between internal soul and external activity. These are not the first movements of a "knowing subject." Where the search for a Freudian desire might take one inward, and the reactivity of Nietzschean *ressentiment* recoils viciously backward, the first moments of parrhesiastic self-formation remain at the surface of activity. In its first instances, the practice of *parrhesia* preserves the immediacy of one's experiences; it is an attention to one's initial responses and actions that hangs suspended before any movement to judgment. Instead of censorship – a mental activity by which one accords one's actions with some external standard of right and wrong – individuals are encouraged simply to be present to themselves before turning to ideals or to the will of another for cues on how to interpret this present reality. In this manner, the curiosity that initially prompts an individual to seek out a *parrhesiastes* gradually becomes claimed by himself; it further requires a resolve to submit oneself to persistent self-examination, despite not knowing where it will finish or entirely how to proceed.

The ontological status of this curiosity and resolve remains ambiguous over the course of the lectures. At times, it appears part of that *matière bios*, or "life material," that sounds rather like Freud's *Rohstoff* of the id or Nietzsche's "raw material" from Book One of the *Genealogy of Morals*. In these moments, it appears to be ontologically prior to the individual to be formed. More often, this *matière bios* gains ontological status by being worked over and elaborated through a relationship

[33] For a very different approach to Foucault on curiosity – one that associates it with the "will to know" – see Paul Rabinow's "Modern and Counter-Modern: Ethos and Epoch in Heidegger and Foucault," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[34] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 153–154.

with another and with truth. Rather than being a fixed object of study, it becomes subject to evaluation as it is formed, molded, and stamped in its public presentation; the ethical matter and the process of shaping it are indistinguishable. In Foucault's previous work, such questions are critical for identifying the extent to which individuals are formed by terms that are not theirs, and for determining whether their formation into a coherent self is predicated on a division between internal (soul, conscience) and external (body, matter).[35] Even as curiosity and resolve serve as important psychological motivations, they are themselves neither ethically nor constitutionally determinate. Their emphasis instead displaces attention onto the activity of self-formation, and the relations to others that sustain it. By turning to these basic psychological capacities, Foucault softens his Nietzschean commitments and returns to the point at which illness was simply weakness and required training in strength and endurance, such that one turns to educators for a different sort of guidance.

### *The "Disposition to Steadiness"*

Freud construes psychoanalysis as a containing context in which the threat of self-disintegration can be worked through. By contrast, Foucault uses the contestatory practices of *parrhesia* to seek a steadiness other than that of normalization. Steadiness becomes the point to which one returns most frequently, rather than something measured by deviation from a norm. In the first instance, to accomplish this aim, Foucault's reading of *parrhesia* alters the terms on which individuals are formed. Rather than mapping an external standard onto docile bodies, Foucault emphasizes the activities that structure individual relations to others. The significance of activity lies in the possibility for its tempo and unfolding to be controlled by practitioners and maintained as central to their sense of self. Foucault flatly states, "With the Greeks, it was the *act* that constituted the important element: it was over the act that one had to exercise control, and of which we had to define the quantity, the rhythm, the opportunity, the circumstances."[36] Activity thus preserves the immediacy of one's experience and emphasizes the pace and process of self-adjustment; to concentrate instead on the nature of acts would be to risk locating a "stealthy, resourceful, and dreadful power"[37] in negative ideals outside

[35] See Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (London: Routledge, 1993) and *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[36] See "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique," *DE II,* 1441.

[37] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 41 and 43.

oneself. Where the spatial imagery of the Panopticon organizes bodies by mapping a spatial order onto them, *parrhesia* maintains individuals as defined by the particularity of elaboration and pacing they give their practices.

The practices of *parrhesia* thus educate individuals to what I term a "disposition to steadiness." As individuals improve their ability to manipulate their curiosity, they learn to forestall immediate reactions and instead to maintain a steady attitude toward themselves, to attend to changes and reactions, and to sift through a raft of information – some sensory, some analytic – before drawing a conclusion. Individuals must try to navigate the two extremes of unblinking fixity and mindless distraction.[38] Repeatedly, Foucault insists that it is a form of "self-mastery" over those distractions – forgetting, uncertainty, longing – that might displace an individual from the immediacy of her experience. Instead of seeking the "truth" about oneself, individuals develop those dispositional qualities that allow them to maintain a steadiness of orientation to their chosen ideals. Techniques in moderation enable individuals to control the pace with which they turn over, consider, and digest the experiences encountered through their daily régime. Such steadiness gains continuity through its elaboration as "memory" in exercises such as those of self-examination, memorization, meditation, and writing. This continuity, however, is one of persistency and return, rather than one of stubborn constancy.

Such a disposition to steadiness is tricky to situate as an ethical structure. Where Aristotle might advocate a "golden mean" between the extremes of a virtue and vice, Foucault, as he reads *parrhesia*, gives little attention to variations in doctrinal content. Instead, practices gain ethical content from the manner by which individuals develop them into a "harmony of words and deeds." Their manner of living, rather than the state of their soul, is examined as they bring their words (*logos*) to bear on their life-deeds (*bios*) in the testing of this life (*épreuve de vie*). Ethical self-governance, and the independence it brings, are attested through the acts one undertakes and the speech-act (*l'énoncé*) with which one testifies to these publicly; one "dares to act" rather than "dares to know." The *épreuve* itself tests not proximity to an ideal but responsiveness; the elaboration of a life continues, shifts, and develops even after the *épreuve* – it is a marker of *where* one is, rather than *who* one is definitely. Lacking a single evaluative standard by which individuals can be evaluated and knowledge about them organized, *parrhesia* instead outlines a body of practices.

[38] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 137.

The question remains, however, as to how coherent such an individual would be and whether her vantage point could adequately serve as one of ethical critique. Although *parrhesia* must rest on normative convention, it requires greater reflexivity from individuals as they take these norms as starting rather than stopping points. Differently from confessional technologies, parrhesiastic techniques teach student two capacities: they teach an individual to set his standard of value and then begin the patient labor of moving between this standard and the world-at-hand. Relations to himself and to others provide both a context of immediacy and one for the recognition and sustenance of these values through a community, but without the creation of a universal ethical code to be internalized as conscience. Again, Serenus's discomfort results not from epistemological uncertainty – he knows the relevant ethical guidelines – but an uncertainty of how to dispose himself to these guidelines in his relations to others. Parrhesiastic practices push individuals toward an assertion of interpretive authority in which they claim less a stable identity than a site or context for judgment: their manner of living emerges through the framing of context, the invocation of guidelines, and the arrangement of their experiences into a publicly sustainable account. From *parrhesia* emerges a subject able to undertake the hard work of judgment aided by guides not yet supplanted by rules.

What emerges from the emphasis on activity, pace, and timing is more than an openness of mind. Personal relationships provide the context in which actions are modulated, techniques of moderation forged, and the activities of *bios* composed and tested. These personal relationships offer a model in which to cultivate, express, and act on ethical steadiness – that is, they offer a structured relationship in which education is not simply the story-telling of an experience of provocation and transfiguration, but instead emerges from the dynamic tension and revision of two individuals' vantage points and the norms that compose them. The first instance of story-telling relies on the heroic account of an individual's encounter with, resistance to, and overcoming of potentially coercive Others and norms; it is an account whose beginning (the claiming of heroic or artistic status) is defined by the continuous reassertion of its end (contest and resistance of stabilizing norms). To return to the earlier discussion of Sartre and Deleuze, it is an account structured by desire (to be otherwise), one ignorant of the parentage of a non-heroic past, and risks being fundamentally conservative (change is localized in the heroic individual).

Yet if, as argued earlier, parrhesiastic accounts concentrate their attention on the "messy middle" of personal interactions and relationships, then their effects are more subtle and rely on parrhesiastic educators as

those who serve as points of orientation rather than as "orthopaedic individualists" who straighten or correct, or agonistic competitors who seek to carry it off over their opponents. Despite the highly charged nature of parrhesiastic encounters, they represent a commitment to the interpretive and strategic arts of negotiation. To use another as a guide or a touchstone means to use her as a marker or signpost – a buoy, perhaps, in troubled waters – by which to get one's bearings. The *basanos* simply recalls individuals to themselves. Motivated by curiosity and resolve rather than desire, parrhesiastic accounts of oneself narrate an interaction, not an experience, compose a public site of judgment not a character, and leave postponed the finality of their endings. *Parrhesia*'s vantage points are multiple such that "it is a matter of bringing into congruence the gaze of the other and that gaze which one aims at oneself when one measures one's everyday actions…".[39] For such an account not to collapse into normalization requires not that norms be forsaken but rather that congruence – the harmony of words and deeds, rather than the singularity of intention – and interpretive modulation of measurement be sought. In keeping with this attention to site, direction of the timing and pace of activity becomes a matter of controlling those strategies that bear on and would govern over oneself. Alluding to Plato's *Republic,* Foucault allows that different individuals may achieve different harmonies that achieve different effects on the ear; no single model of ethical self-governance exists. *Parrhesia*'s contribution as an educational practice, then, lies in its ability to school individuals in a common set of ethical practices. This body of practices both provides a measure of continuity and coherence to the practitioner's development and establishes a basic commonalty across practitioners, even as the content and effect of their practices looks distinctively different. Self-governance becomes less a matter of obeying grammatical criteria than achieving prosody in one's manner of living.

The work of judgment thus becomes quite different, and possibly more uncomfortable. Although the terms in the first moment of judgment are the *parrhesiastes*'s own, it should lead "not so much [to] a decipherment of the self by the self as an opening one gives the other onto oneself." This opening is one in which "one opens oneself to the gaze of others and puts the [other] in the place of the inner god."[40] Both student and educator postpone the neutral finality of juridical examination or authorial control over the content of the account being narrated; instead, curiosity about the

[39] Foucault, "Self Writing," *Ethics*, 221.
[40] Foucault, "Self Writing," *Ethics*, 217.

world-at-hand and commitment to the relationship generate an ethical site of assessment. To the act of judgment, the interlocutor brings his own experiences to bear on the act of judgment and, as a result, is poised to judge either more sharply or more compassionately. *Parrhesia* divides the individual into neither act nor intention but instead challenges the equilibrium and valuation achieved through one's relation to oneself and to others.

As the education comes to a close, the student is able to return to the initial parrhesiastic relationship and scrutinize it anew for previously unrecognized instances of either manipulation or ethical distinction (*éclat*). In both instances, the emphasis lies resolutely on the manner by which individuals relate to one another; the terms neither of authority nor of moral obligation are set in advance. With its insistence on context, practices, and relationality, *parrhesia* introduces a greater degree of nuance into conceptions of moral desert.[41] Rather than insisting that all others have equal claim to our trust and honesty – through something like a categorical imperative – the parrhesiastic encounter teaches individuals those strategies by which individuals can choose to trust – or not. It is as much an education in sincere suspicion as in sincere trust. As an ethics, it demonstrates the notable advantage of enabling an expressivity not merely of openness, trust, and engagement but also of where these virtues need necessarily be held in restraint.

### *The Expressive Subject*

Where Foucault's reading in ancient texts began as an inquiry into the prehistory of Christian confessional technologies, and the gradual naturalization and humanization of those practices that made humans recognizable as such, it finishes with an ethical community independent of a *telos*. *Parrhesia* prompts individuals to consider their work on the self in light of their social relations to others. The effect is to rework the terms of moral obligation and the way such terms and obligations structure a community, in movement toward an ethical community defined in reference to its own internally generated norms rather than to an external order.

*Parrhesia* would seem to offer an example of how the movement to assess claims to value at least begins with local, personal relationships even though it requires a broader set of collective practices to sustain such claims. Foucault explains, "A long time ago one knew that the role of philosophy was not to discover what is hidden but to render visible precisely

[41] For a slightly different take on moral desert, see Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

what is visible; that is to say, to make appear what is so close, what is so immediate, what is so intimately linked to ourselves that because of all this we do not perceive it."[42] It is through the act of redescription that the "expressive subject" submits events to be considered according to local distinctions between truthfulness and falsity. For such reflection to generate ethical values, the parrhesiastic mode of truth-telling would need to be brought to bear on other values – such as liberty or security – central to that community; such a relationship would enable this mode of truth-telling to be stable under reflection and to acquire value itself. The intuition here is that truth-telling practices are collectively, not individually, maintained.[43] Such public redescriptions test the truth content of these events and claims for the present of "now and around here"; the mode of truth-telling is resolutely local and articulated in terms of the community at hand.[44] As historian Paul Veyne has commented, it is "less a philosophy of truth than of speaking-truly."[45] It offers a mode of truth-telling that results in the creation of an ethical structure capable of establishing and assessing a provisional harmony of words and deeds.

Read against Foucault's earlier work on populations and biopower, such ethical deliberation would need to work against the tendency, when settling on the ordering of values, to forget that the process of such an order*ing* is not itself an order, and emphatically not a natural one. Individuals would need to establish some means of giving priority to some values over others, or at least to understanding this valuating process. Yet from critical attention to their own experiences, and their capacity for self-governance, individuals would seem to gain a different ability to talk about hard cases and exceptions to governing norms. No longer dependent on the terms and authority structures of external order, individuals need not push these beyond the borders of community from a subjectivity defined from fear. Instead, the psychology of ethical self-governance is different – it educates individuals to a manner of understanding better equipped to consider challenges to ethical standards of value. As areas of weakness, not illness, these hard cases will become new sites of ethical work; they will be occasions for ongoing care, not singular cure, of oneself and one's community.

[42] Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," *DE II*, 540–41.
[43] *CT,* 141–53.
[44] Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).
[45] Veyne, "Foucault Revolutionizes History" in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, 153.

If by the end of *Discipline and Punish*, "the soul has become the prison of the body," then steadiness is the attempt to dismantle that prison. The movement of adjustments that contribute to steadiness is the movement between the "prison" from which one perhaps starts, toward another mode of existence (*une vie autre*). One cannot simply exit the prison willfully and with one swift movement; the exit or *Ausgang* must be created and its way prepared slowly in advance. Thus the steadiness that grounds *parrhesia* renders it less a ceaseless questioning – one that risks being aimless, destabilizing, or dissipating into ineffective critique – than a set of practices that enables individuals to become grounded and to thoroughly inhabit themselves.

### From Self-Governance to Political Engagement

Foucault's return to the ancients responds to what he terms a "crisis in governance" in which the grounds to legitimate and justify actions undertaken lead to individual paralysis and an administrative governance. And much like the Nietzschean turn invoked in Chapter 4, it is motivated by an overwrought intellectualism that has stifled a "simple seeing and hearing" and led to the "disrepute of politics" generally speaking.[46] Differently from Nietzsche, Foucault focuses on the crisis of governance – the concurrent modern tendency to embrace political technologies of administration while gutting potentially more robust relations in governance. Disgust with ideological program, and suspicion of metaphysics, has led to an abdication of the responsibilities of self- and political governance alike. Foucault recognizes that if ethical or political judgments cannot be decided in advance, enormous pressure is placed on action in the present. That relationship to others – which is also a relationship to truth and oneself – becomes the only real support. Rather than wrapping its practices in ideological program, *parrhesia* "actualizes" its practices by rendering them present, current, and concrete. The turn to practices of conduct (*conduite*) becomes an effort to cultivate and redirect attention to those relations that are the condition for action. The turn to these relations is not made from fear of harm – it is not a remedy for the psychic injuries of classification (*The Order of Things*), normalization (*Discipline and Punish*) or incitement to speech (*History of Sexuality 1*). Foucault even castigates those who would retract their political commitments from a psychology of fear. Instead, this turn is made because these collective practices constitute the resources individuals have to work with as they

[46] Peter Euben, *Platonic Noise* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 15.

develop themselves ethically and act politically. In this sense, Foucault has been said to historicize the synthetic *a priori* knowledge that informs Kantian ethics.[47] While these ancient ethical practices do not immediately constitute a politics in their own right, they serve as neighboring practices – practices that support, sustain, and render sensical other, related practices – to those that are political, and thus require a common currency or vocabulary of values, however contingent to that society.

Parrhesiastic practices might then serve a need signaled by Foucault far earlier in May 1968, when he argued that political practice has transformed "the conditions of [the] emergence, insertion and function" of discourses bearing on subject-formation, and urged that any progressive politics recognize these conditions as its starting point.[48] Foucault's point becomes reiterated and sharpened when in 1980 he comments that a certain window of opportunity has opened up in the late twentieth century not seen since the end of feudalism: "We are perhaps at the beginning of a crisis in the re-evaluation of the problem of governance."[49] The nature of this crisis is at once ethical and political – Foucault comments that modern liberation movements seem to be in need of an ethics,[50] although he argues that their crisis derives from the procedures and techniques that guaranteed "the guidance (*le guidage*) of individuals by one another."[51] While Foucault initially reworks the liberatory politics offered by Deleuze in *Anti-Oedipus*, he later moves away from it altogether. As early as 1978, Foucault improvises from planned remarks to sketch figures of the "pedagogical philosopher"[52] and the "anti-despotic philosopher" who "will remain, in relation to power, independent; he will laugh at power."[53] He offers "the philosopher [as] moderator of power, the philosopher [as a] grimacing mask before power,"[54] and speculates that "the role for

[47] See *Le Courage de la vérité*, 21 mars 1984, CD 10A. The published translation is slightly different: "Second, the mission received in this way is not a legislator's or even a governor's mission. It is a care relationship, a medical relationship. The Cynic treats people. He brings them medication thanks to which they will really be able to assure their own cure and their own happiness. He is the instrument of the happiness of others," *CT*, 279.

[48] Foucault, "History, Discourse and Discontinuity," trans. Anthony M. Nazzaro, *Salmagundi* 20 (Summer-Fall 1972): 225–48, 243 and 246ff. Foucault's essay appears in the special issue, *Psychological Man: Approaches to an Emergent Social Type*. It was initially published as "Réponse à une question" in *ESPRIT* (May 1968).

[49] Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," *DE* II, 913.

[50] Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique," *DE* II, 1430.

[51] Foucault, "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," *DE* II, 912–13.

[52] Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," *DE* II, 537.

[53] Foucault, "La philosophie analytique de la politique," *DE* II, 537.

[54] Foucault, "La philosophe analytique de la politique," *DE II*, 537.

moderation in relation to power merits once again being played."[55] But does Foucault's appeal to moderation suggest a politics of reform rather than one with a more critical and utopian vision?

Answering this question requires thinking through a politics organized around something other than a knowing subject. Emergent from the plurality of ancient models of self-formation is a self defined through the ongoing process of learning rather than a knowing subject (defined in relation to a more stable body of knowledge). Defending this claim hinges on, in different ways, "mis-reading" some of the primary ancient traditions. Foucault's reading of Seneca emphasizes those texts organized around interpersonal communication (rather than imaginary interlocutors that lack the same social valence). Likewise, the Platonic texts treated are unusual – the *Apology*, the *Alcibiades*, the *Laches*, the *Seventh Letter* – although bound by a common interest in education and its relation to politics. Foucault's readings again emphasize the effect of interlocutors – the eye of another that reflects the self to itself in *Alcibiades*, the exchange seeking a definition of 'courage' in *Laches* – as the condition for aligning *logos* with *bios*. And while reading Diogenes, Foucault calls attention to community standards in the maxim 'change the value of the money' (a project I examine in greater detail in Chapter 6). Across these three groupings, then, there is a common interest in the educative process of self-formation, and one that is bound to community neither through political institution nor the internalization of community standard. The result is an account of self-formation in which interpersonal relationships become the basis for acquiring knowledge, and one in which the balance between knowing and doing is weighted toward action. Rather than relying on the internalization of a community standard, ethics becomes a relation to an ideal, and relations toward others become the basis of that ideal's evaluation.

*Parrhesia*'s expressive subject – who dares to act, rather than to know – forces Foucault's readers to return to the ancient world and re-evaluate the maxim 'know thyself.' Foucault repeatedly claims he is more interested in the motto 'care for yourself,' but leaves the content of this care frustratingly opaque. As his readers, we might elucidate this care, by reading 'know thyself' alongside another phrase on the pronaos of the temple at Delphi: know your limits. The appeal to moderation, or *sophrosyne*, suggests less an abstemious temperance than an attention

[55] Foucault, "La philosophe analytique de la politique," *DE II,* 537.

to one's position and responsibilities within the community.[56] It fits well with Foucault's own insistence on the social context of *parrhesia* to the point of historical inaccuracy. But to what end? Foucault's ancient context makes it possible to consider societal moderation, and the disposition to steadiness that accompanies it, without lapsing into the model of a crude Freudian self in which such moderation looks like repression, or the unthinking internalization of community standards. We now are better situated to understand how these interpersonal relationships become the basis for acquiring a knowledge tilted toward action. If Foucault's analyses of social institutions each offer a mode of "seeing and saying," then the variant models of *parrhesia* could be said to pluralize the ways of "seeing and saying," and in a way that persons can manage independent of institutional context. These relations become the conditions for insight and articulacy without stabilizing individuals into objects of knowledge. Taken this way, Plato and Diogenes become limit-examples. Plato's texts each offer an approach to self-knowledge stabilized by the conviction that this knowledge reflects the divine; and Diogenes' provocative acts suggest a purity of self and insight. As limit-examples, however, these texts redirect a weightier attention to the Hellenist period, and the practices of trust and truth-telling existing at the intersection of interpersonal exchange, ethics, and politics.

By understanding *parrhesia*'s emphasis on interpersonal relations, Foucault provides a set of "practices in liberty" that constitute a "way out" of this set of dilemmas. Historically speaking, *parrhesia* operates before scientific rationalization and Christian confession; in between historical periods, practices of self, politics, and knowledge had not yet congealed into those that offer first the classical subject of representation, and soon after the biopolitical population and confessional subject. *Parrhesia*'s techniques provide a means to make individual resistance to broader processes of normalization differently productive through the introduction of reflexive distance into the process of self-formation.[57] But persons must start, not end, with where they are in their relations to

[56] For an extensive discussion of *sophrosyne*, its relation to self-knowledge, and its distinction from modern notions of self-control, see Shadi Bartsch, *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge and the Gaze in Early Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 24ff; Julia Annas, "Self-Knowledge in Early Plato," in *Platonic Investigations*, ed. Dominic O'Meara (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1985), 120–1.

[57] These late lectures thus address some of Alessandro Pizzorno's concerns in "Foucault and the Liberal View of the Individual," *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 204–11.

others. Foucault thus concretizes his earlier admonition that critique must not be the premise of a rationale that finishes with: "Here, then, is what is left for you to do. It must be an *instrument* for those who fight, resist, and who no longer want what is. It must be used in the *process* of conflicts, confrontations, efforts at refusal. It must not be as a law to the law. […] The problem at stake is the subject-of-action – the action by which reality is transformed."[58] Elaborated in conditions of structured uncertainty, with *parrhesia* both parties agree to make themselves vulnerable to frank speech and the indeterminate outcomes such speech implies. Such barbed dialogues school the student in independence and, as a result, begin to confer the ability to act with sincerity and courage from positions of strength rather than from dependency on "experts."

Holding onto this reading of *parrhesia* against Foucault's earlier work on authorship unexpectedly clarifies its political implications. Foucault's 1968 essay on discourse suggests the criteria by which new practices might contribute to a progressive politics.[59] *Parrhesia*'s practices expand rather than regulate criteria of participation (by opening participation to more than the "genius" or "certain spirited souls");[60] political community no longer is composed of stabilized subjects and so premised on the exclusion of some (indeed, the terms of expressive subjectivity suggest we speak of plural communities, variegated and shifting); the in-between space of *parrhesia* is organized by an ongoing revisitation of the unavoidable, but provisional, settlements of community care (rather than according to an economic principle of assistance, or a biopolitical principle of distribution and access); teaching is neither limited to nor determined by institutional context; and these changes are undertaken in the hopes of changing how discourse intervenes in the political and administrative control of society. The weakest element in Foucault's rendering of *parrhesia* is the last one: an account of collective practices. That challenge will be taken up in Chapters 6 and 7. For now, I will stress a crucial shift away from a more clearly Nietzschean agonism. Across Foucault's account, of greater interest than confrontation itself are the techniques and strategies used in the struggle to accomplish something.

[58] Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," *DE II*, 851.

[59] Speaking about medical discourse, Foucault outlines crucial points of contact between practices and discourse in "History, Discourse and Discontinuity," 243ff. He then continues to analyze the effects of these "rules of formation," and the criteria for any progressive politics to alter them, on the following pages. My discussion in this paragraph adopts these points of contact as criteria by which to evaluate parrhesiastic practices.

[60] Foucault, "History, Discourse and Discontinuity," 246, 245.

Transformation occurs only when those who act "fight with and amongst themselves, have met up with impasses, blockades, impossibilities, and have endured conflicts and confrontations, when critique has played out in reality (*aura été jouée dans le réel*), and not when the reformers have instantiated (*réalisé*) their ideas."[61] Action requires a grasp of "the real," an ability to articulate what is dimly visible, and to bring the techniques learned through self-governance to bear on this reality. It returns persons back to those interpersonal relations, however flawed, that give value to politics and the public. *Parrhesia*'s disarmingly "simple seeing and hearing" attends to those limits of community to move past any present disrepute of politics.

Although Foucault believes such ethical work might prepare for public engagement, he avoids any claim that such ethical cultivation translates automatically into political action. Individuals may have a richer set of ethical resources upon which to draw and potentially enter politics, but it remains to them to make that choice. Forcing that connection might be perilous. A clue to the perils of such self-governance for politics appears in Alexander's famously reported comment to Diogenes: "If I were not Alexander, I should like to be Diogenes." Politically, this remark might be interpreted as illustrative of Alexander's own humility and of the moderation with which he exercised his own power. Yet it also alerts us modern readers to another danger: for Alexander to express himself as does Diogenes, would be to require him to be someone other than who he, in fact, is. It would be to deny his currency, his powerful position, and the very real relations that constitute the political and social terms of community – in Christian terms, it would be an act of self-renunciation, while in Deleuzian terms it would be an act made from longing.[62] On Foucauldian terms, it would be a refusal to recognize the limits of community.

In the first two instances, the cost of longing or self-renunciation would be that stability of mind and presence to oneself that Foucault finds to be so difficult to establish and so inherently fragile. It would also be a denial of those structuring relations of power that constitute the political field and a person's position. Renunciation and desire simply return individuals to the unsteady longing to be other than what they are. Paradoxically,

[61] Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," *DE II*, 851–52.

[62] Additionally, Foucauldian self-governance cannot be the romantic self-invention imagined by Richard Rorty by which *rapport à soi* is a "refusal to be exhaustively describable in words which apply to anyone other than himself." See "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy" in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 328–29.

the daily adjustments of *parrhesia* result in a greater steadiness both in thought and action. Requiring individuals to be otherwise is to unsettle them without educating them to the techniques by which they might regain their balance. As a political program, then, its effects will be fleeting, as individuals are unable to situate themselves in these new ideals or to feel invested in the relations – to themselves, to others, to truth – that sustain it. Foucault's historical sense prompts a return to the ancients to discourage his audience's retreat from politics that should really be a retreat from uncritical political program.

## The In-Between Space of *Parrhesia*

Paul Veyne notes that in Foucault's new schema, "what is opposed to time [as in 'times past'] as well as eternity is our own valorization of the present."[63] Foucault's use of the ancients considers this valorization in terms of finding value in the world-at-hand. Undoubtedly to many, Foucault's turn to the ancients will seem akin to one of plunder or to the despoiling of an archaeological dig. Yet these digs help us to understand our present in light of the past, and to claim actively the inheritance it provides for us – an inheritance composed both of stubborn, inconvenient facts and of faded glories. This move has prompted some, like Nancy Rosenblum, to characterize Foucault as a Romantic suffering from a "psychology of self-defense"[64] or others, such as Richard Rorty, as a "knight of autonomy" pursuing the "goal of self-overcoming and self-invention."[65] By critics, such charges would usually imply whimsical impracticality or irresponsibility. Yet Foucault speaks to Weber's sober claim that our heavens are in shreds and that the appropriate response is neither romantic despair nor revolutionary exuberance nor existential anguish. Foucault's turn toward *parrhesia* reflects not a selfish interest in self-fashioning but commitment to a set of ethical practices that would focus individuals squarely on their relations to others, and on their own words and deeds, as the necessary substance of ethical work. Once again, Euben's arguments about Nietzsche resonate. Nietzsche's own appropriation of the classics should show up moderns merely as "spectators of their lives, not actors in it."[66] While Foucault reads

[63] Paul Veyne, "The Final Foucault and His Ethics" in *Foucault and His Interlocutors,* ed. Arnold Davidson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 227.
[64] Nancy Rosenblum, "Pluralism and Self-Defense," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
[65] Rorty, "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy," 328–34.
[66] Euben, *Platonic Noise*, 27.

the ancients to urge a similar, sharply honed historical sense, his texts also offer more obvious resources for authorial agency.

In keeping with this Nietzschean filiation, Foucault disclaims that his reading of Antiquity is a return to a golden age.[67] Put more bluntly, the problem to which *parrhesia* might count as a response is not the same as the problem outlined in *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*. Where those two works argued that individuals were over-steady, over-coherent, *disciplined*, steadiness and a forever imperfect coherence in parrhesiastic practice are something to be attained.[68] Reading Foucault's late works against his middle works, or reading Foucauldian *parrhesia* against Freudian psychoanalysis, reveals something about the nature of these two problems. Foucault's earlier works (and especially *Discipline and Punish*) implicitly seem to rely on a Nietzschean will to power or *ressentiment*, one that invests in its own subjection while keeping structuring ideals intact. Chapter 3 argued that psychoanalytic practices offer a *désassujétissement* that seeks to undo the effects of such *ressentiment*. If Foucault's earlier work presumes a psychoanalytic account of our investment in relations of power and the structures that organize subjection, then his late work similarly needs a Freudian account. For all that Foucault's late lectures offer an expressive subjectivity rooted in curiosity and resolve, they are weakest on questions of affective investment. They would seem to rely, implicitly, on a psychoanalytic account of the metaphoric competences outlined in Chapter 3. Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic encounters share some similarities that make this claim possible. Each rests on the relational bond of educator and student that moves past standard divisions of philosophic subject and object, or political activity and passivity. Both rely on and expand a space intermediate to personal and collective practices, ethics, and politics. And both derive trust and truth-telling from a combative collaboration. In Chapter 4 I called attention to the contradictions created by liberalism for late moderns; now we can return to thinking about what "living within" such contradictions would entail. If Freud offers us a model of psychoanalytic practice as

[67] Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique," *DE II*.

[68] In an interview, Foucault contrasts 1967 (and the development of structuralism) with the existentialism that emerges in France in 1945. Where existentialism responds to a political crisis dating, says Foucault, to 1933, structuralism is different. Foucault claims, "By contrast, structuralism was born and developed in a period of political drought, at least in France, where, after the end of the Algerian war, Gaullism could barely mobilize the interest of intellectuals." Foucault, "La philosophie structuraliste permet à diagnostiquer ce qu'est 'aujourd'hui'" in *DE* 1, 610. The translation is mine.

providing a containing (if combative) context in which to sort through self-disintegration, then Foucault offers a contestatory (yet trusting) context to make steadiness something other than normalization. Both Freud and Foucault make use of their spaces intermediate to politics to create a context in which individuals have no choice but to trust themselves – quite literally the individual has no other choice since the analyst's subjectivity is distorted through transference and the *parrhesiastes*'s virtues are idiosyncratic to convention. Each seeks a different steadiness; the impermanence of analysis leaves the Freudian subject more intact and individualist, while the parrhesiastic subject remains defined through relational expression.

As in the previous chapter, *parrhesia* further draws attention to a fundamental difference in the place for risk in ethical self-governance and political governance. Where ethical self-governance is governed by norms of harmony, equilibrium, and steadiness, the norms constituting political governance are different. The daily rough-and-tumble of politics rests on norms of dissent and contestation; in choosing their leaders, debating political programs, and distributing resources, citizens argue and inveigh.[69] Politics relies on the contestation of those collective practices that might facilitate the internalization of cultural norms and values, and unfolds through the contest of claims.[70] Where the art of self-governance takes as its goal a steadiness of disposition and a harmony of words and deeds, modern political governance relies on an artful interruption of cultural attitudes and actions. While *parrhesia* contributes an ethical steadiness to those who participate in such debates, its personal relationships cannot be scaled so as to characterize politics. Differently from what is often inferred in accounts of a Foucauldian politics of resistance, transgression is not the only possible mode of action, and critique does not automatically entail resistance. Indeed the irreducibility of ethical relationships to a single subjectivity, and the insistence on modes of responsiveness, would seem to extend to parrhesiastic politics. The extreme difficulty in establishing one's own harmony of words and deeds – and of mediating relations to others – should make individuals more substantively cognizant of the value conflicts that characterize their community and

[69] The distinction between the norms of ordinary politics versus extraordinary politics is made in Gary Shiffman, "Construing Debate: Consensus and Invective in 'Constitutional' Debate," *Political Theory*, 30. 2 (April 2002): 175–203.

[70] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*. Foucault's contrast between the harmony sought by personal relationships of *parrhesia* and the scandal provoked by the cynic Diogenes in public life reinforces this distinction.

less threatened by the existence of other manners of being. Politics, too, would seem to need multiple manners of being, modes of truth-telling, and models of subjectivity.

A different model of truth-telling and engagement might be especially needed in those extraordinary moments when matters of political principle and foundation enter public debate. Here, *parrhesia* makes a more obvious contribution to political engagement. In such moments, the normative pressure is on forging or reforging a consensus, on repairing a break, on re-orienting the community's course. In such moments, individuals seek consensus under the pressure of political necessity, but they do so in the absence of settled norms and values for evaluating such a consensus. Foucault's work on *parrhesia* suggests that to recognize such moments and adjust one's response accordingly requires a discretionary capability and a capacity to settle on values one is willing to stand for. The practices of *parrhesia* offer a moment of observation key for those extraordinary moments of politics where the challenge is not always to challenge, protest, and revolutionize (although it is often that), but also to consider what might be an effective and appropriate response to such challenges – to consider how and to what extent political norms and values ought be revised for a particular community at a particular historical juncture. Indeed, from Foucault's work on *parrhesia* arises the necessary role not just of agitators but also of spectators, spectators who hesitate, who observe, who gauge the possibilities for political responsiveness. Just as those participants to the spectacle of the scaffold determine the response to public power – a vicarious revelry, an inversion of relations of authority, a challenge to the executionary power of the state – so do these spectators determine the political narratives to be told and the cultural values to be internalized.

Throughout his lectures, Foucault comments on those texts that would make such ethical self-governance a precondition for participation in politics; one must be able to rule oneself before attempting to rule others. Such a claim is not unusual for texts that generally view the *oikos* and *polis* as distinct from one another, modern interpretations and arguments to the contrary. This claim serves as yet another reminder that Foucault does not claim to be offering a straightforward solution to modern disenchantments. Instead, the modern challenge is the challenge of adaptation: to read these practices against our own and to consider whether in them we find a prehistory of a time very different than our own; a genealogy from which we are directly descended; or a model for ethical self-governance from which we can borrow and revise. Foucault's reading of

*parrhesia* as a model pushes us to recognize both the particularity in this model's application among individuals, and the possibility for there to be other models. If Foucault truly does not want to play the prophet or the moralist, and if his conception of liberty is of it as a set of practices, then *parrhesia* cannot count as a singular answer to the question, "What is to be done?"

In a manner both more critical and (perhaps surprisingly) more utopian, any adaptation of ancient *parrhesia* must engage the Nietzschean claim that moderns are "spectators of their lives, and not actors in it." On this point I would argue that Foucault's dramatics of discourse (itself never completely developed) offers more than an uncomplicated embrace of agency and denunciation of on-looking. Foucault shares Euben's concern that as "historical knowledge streams in from inexhaustible wells that stretch back into infinity, men become sated and paralyzed by facts and possibilities, made impotent and lifeless by multiplicities of undifferentiated facts and values, and mired in verbiage."[71] As I will argue in the next two chapters, Foucault and Freud both recognize the resulting need to cultivate an ability to intervene in what Foucault calls a "proliferation of meaning." In different ways, Freud and Foucault work against and complicate the tendency to cast spectatorship on purely passive grounds by making its relation to agency more interactive and dynamic. To return to Gérard Genette's apposite phrase, those who are "off to the side" rewrite as they read. Where Freud's case histories fail to create a narrative authority fit for this task, his failures illustrate the difficulty in moving from individual practices to those more collective, as we will see in Chapter 6. For their part, parrhesiastic practices seek to empower spectating audiences beyond the aesthetic provocation of what Nietzsche calls the "inward flashing eye of the [individual] artist." These practices are utopian in two ways: First, in presuming that structuring ideals cannot only be engaged but altered and made potent (and this without lapsing into dogma). Second, in thinking that these changes can come "from below." Already my recursive reading of Euben and Nietzsche has suggested an inter-textual circulation of reading practices. Beyond a coy intertextuality, this reading seeks to move the paradox binding liberty and authority, which creates the space for interpretive agency, out into the world. Chapter 7, then, will tackle most directly this use of history that is also an "abuse of words" or the rhetorical strategy of *catachresis*.

[71] Euben, *Platonic Noise*, 35.

# 6

# Audiences and the Proliferation of Meaning

## A Tale of Two Audiences

The burden of this book thus far has been to analyze the two models of ethical self-cultivation offered by Freud and Foucault, and to think of them as composed of relationships of authority that bear on an ethical subjectivity. Differently from the parrhesiastic model, the psychoanalytic model is more explicitly oriented toward the ability to form meaningful attachments and meaning-laden communities. One might now say, along with Jessica Benjamin, that "The person who remains unable to process bodily tension except through motoric discharge or somatic symptoms could be described not as lacking speech or symbolic capacity, but as *lacking a relationship that is a condition of that capacity*."[1] As with other ethical models, the ability of either psychoanalytic or parrhesiastic practices to take root more broadly implies, first, an audience attuned to their virtues, and second, a variety of public institutions, practices, and laws that would encourage their broader cultivation.[2] The challenge is especially acute for psychoanalysis; if its practices are to rouse a wider audience they must reach beyond the couch and compel a lay (and seemingly asymptomatic) public of their ethical insights. Psychoanalysis must engage the symbolic firmaments of a culture and open up space for new expressions

[1] Jessica Benjamin, "The Primal Leap of Psychoanalysis, From Body to Speech: Freud, Feminism, and the Vicissitudes of the Transference," in *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (NY: Routledge, 1998), 55. Emphasis added.

[2] David Owen makes such a point regarding the use of Nietzsche as a model for ethical cultivation in "Pluralism and the Pathos of Distance (Or How to Relax with Style)," in *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10(2): 210–226.

of meaning.[3] Absent any clear "testament," for history to become "ours" requires turning to these questions of audience and asking where such practices might be publicly sited. That psychoanalysis speaks to two defining aspects of contemporary politics – the preoccupation with identity and difference – is an ambivalent ambidexterity. As Leo Bersani explains, "Psychoanalysis is hyperbolically aware of the world as different from the self – which is why it can so brilliantly describe all our techniques for erasing that difference and why it is of so little help in constructing an epistemology and an ethics grounded in perceptions of sameness."[4]

Inadvertently, psychoanalysis shows up a problem in our thinking on public audiences. It shifts attention to the presence or disappearance of events by offering a structured context in which our responses to these events can be husbanded and worked-through. In Chapter 1 I noted that Patchen Markell locates a similar shift in Arendt's preoccupation with action; he argues that Arendt is less preoccupied in settling the determination or indeterminacy of actions than the contexts that frame events and efforts to make sense of them. The insistence on psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* as *askesis* rather than ideal subjectivities now comes into clearer focus; the presumption is that persons will always face the challenge of managing the gap between where they are and where they take themselves to be, and that "making sense" amounts to efforts to narrate this disjuncture. Once again, as Genette claims, there are always those who are "off to the side": hearing but not directly addressed, reading others' claims but rewriting as they go along. Such a move away from (relatively static qualities) of personal capacity or judgment places more pressure on how persons circulate between these roles, roles that are both readerly and writerly in nature. On Markell's reading, the political challenge of maintaining this nexus between event and responsiveness is "to sustain, intensify, and democratize the beginnings with which we are already confronted."[5] What would it mean to extend this challenge from the unusual *topoi* of psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices into a more emphatically public space? And, to make participation more than responsiveness, how might persons come to claim the *agency* of response – the ability to find in reading a rewriting?

[3] For a psychoanalytic perspective on this challenge, see Edgar Levenson, "The Politics of Interpretation," in *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 32.4 (October 1996): 631–48.

[4] Leo Bersani, "Against Monogamy," in *Is the Rectum a Grave? and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 99.

[5] Patchen Markell, "The Rule of the People: Arendt, Archê, and Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 100.1 (February 2006): 1–14, 12.

The extension of *askesis* into a more public space would put pressure on those conditions that constrain or expand citizens' responsiveness to events rather than necessitating spaces or persons untouched by power. To use the language of psychoanalysis, it would seek out experiences that are world-expanding rather than world-contracting. Democratic theorists usually fear that the institutional and discursive space of politics will shut down projects of autonomy or that they will narrow any political expression to the continued authorization of an already-authoritative politics. Rejecting the exclusionary poles of liberation and authority means distancing oneself from these fears and instead concentrating on the *activity* reducible to neither that might be sustained in their stead. The shift away from individual capacities and toward the circulation between social and political roles – between the roles of reader and writer, actor and spectator, governor and governed – itself shifts attention to the conduits of social and political practices, discourses, institutions, and structures that frame the event-space of politics. Here one might wonder whether the asymmetrical reciprocity found in psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships further changes the composition and experience of publics. In his own work on counterpublics, Michael Warner has argued that relationships of dependence and independence neither easily resolve into "public" or "private," nor are they static.[6] Instead, individuals often exchange and redefine their roles and relationships depending on the context. While individuals may share the formal political status of equals, their relationships are much more variegated and influenced by hierarchy – heterogeneity becomes the defining feature of publics and the condition for change. In juxtaposing publics and their counters, Warner seeks out those "spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not replicative merely."[7] The exchange of roles and transmutation of relationships cited by Warner, as individuals move between multiple publics, requires a different training in interpretive discretion rather than a simple embrace of liberation and condemnation of dependence. Insofar as these publics are different cultural moments of valuation rather than discrete, well-bounded spaces or communities, their participants need to be trained in the art of valuation and evaluation.

[6] While both historical and critical attention has been given to the varied nature of associations within publics, Warner emphasizes that such associations differ in political and intellectual style, in mode of organization, and in orientation to normative value. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005).

[7] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 122.

Psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic models both exemplify Warner's charge and offer specific sites and activities that contribute to his "poesis of scene making." Their practices in metaphoric competence and narrative (Freud) as well as steadiness and expressive action (Foucault) comprise a set of poetic techniques. These techniques could be described as a set of reading practices oriented toward those "structures of intelligibility" that mediate persons and context. My turn, then, to "legibility" is deliberate. It flags two movements. The first is a movement from interpersonal to public context. By developing a new lexicon for the entangled social and epistemological uncertainties of modernity, psychoanalytic technique helps to make individuals differently "legible" to themselves and others. If perfect legibility would involve moving from one's internal world, from which one has a singular perspective on external events, to a more comprehensive mapping of these events onto a broader social order, then Freud's case histories draw attention to those hiccups that would disrupt such easy movements. Freud's case histories are instructive for more than their failure to successfully alienate judgment to an external standpoint. They suggest that modern social order has become an imperfect assertion of metaphoric coherence, in which what requires further "readings" are the back-and-forth movements of individuals between socio-political and individual orders. Interpretation acquires symbolic and political value from the need to explain suffering and to organize the social consequences of individual action.

Second, the concept and practices of legibility capture an aspect of the adaptation of individual to collective practices often overlooked – namely, legibility reminds us of the necessary establishment of some formal third-person perspective on processes of transformation.[8] Where the dynamics of the psychoanalytic encounter explored in Chapters 2 and 3 deliberately suppress such a perspective, such a suppression is impossible in the writing of case histories. Freud instead needs a stable perspective from which to author psychoanalytic cases and to prod his audience to authorize his clinical and theoretical endeavors. As I will argue in the next section, Freud's efforts are ultimately unsuccessful even as these

[8] Psychoanalysts refer to something similar when they speak of the "analytic third" – the third perspective of an analytic encounter created by both patient and analyst. I do not use the term here, because my concept of "legibility" has a greater concern for issues of cultural legibility and because those developing the "analytic third" have engaged with Habermasian models of understanding rooted in a different epistemology and politics. For more, see among others, Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); and *Like Subjects, Love Objects* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

failures are suggestive for my shaping of Foucault's *parrhesia* into collective practices. To stabilize such a perspective, I argue that Foucault turns to *phusiologia* as a knowledgeable "body of practices." Audiences can thus orient themselves to the public performance of *parrhesia*. In calling attention to those regimes that mediate between individuals and the collective in terms of legibility, I want to insist on the inseparable interpretive and political dimensions to these regimes. In this chapter I will turn first to Freud's case histories as efforts to map the internal, disarticulated world of patients onto a set of sense-making frameworks more broadly available to the readers of these histories. Here, Freud's case histories reveal the challenges of representing the resistance to interpretive closure for a public audience. For Foucault, the challenge is easier. Resting on the intransigencies of social convention, Foucault differently seeks normative *dis*investment.

## Narrative Authority of the Psychoanalyst

Although psychoanalysis is generally thought of as profoundly personal, if not self-absorbed, for its practices to spread and be culturally viable required the creation of an audience ready to authorize this intermediate space and its ethical undertaking. At the time of its inception, psychoanalysis had the prosaic challenge of creating an audience that could value its practices and recognize itself in the unflattering portraits of analytic patients and ignoble outlines of human character. Acutely aware of these audience problems, Freud spent a significant amount of his professional time giving lectures to specialists and the lay public both. By weaving his own writings on psychoanalysis together with references to Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare; to his work on social studies of juvenile delinquency (as in the preface to August Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*); or in adventing a role for sexual education in public schools, Freud gave psychoanalytic reflection a place in western European intellectual history. Not only did he create a frame of reference distinctly appealing to bourgeois and aristocratic Viennese, Freud also explicitly linked these to the moral sensibility of the European community.

Certainly these gestures ease potential audience members into a terrain that might otherwise be too scandalous. But to consider these automatically a "reading public" is to underplay the difficulties of turning voyeurs into an authorial audience. This transformation would seem to have less to do with direct cultivation of psychic faculties of empathy, wonder, or imagination, and more with a set of "narrative capacities"

that organize these faculties. After all, the analytic patient becomes educated to the workings of authority by gaining a kind of "metaphoric competence" – by understanding his own efforts to manipulate, revise, and otherwise rewrite the norms of community as they bear on himself. The goal of psychoanalysis is not to tell *a* story or stories in general. It is to increase *narrative capacity*: the ability to understand the interactions between form (dream, memory, fantasy) and meaning, and to develop a flexibility of response.[9] For the patient, understanding occurs when she can grasp the choice of formal narrative structure (fantasy, dream, etc.) and its effect on the events being narrated. Narrative capacity augments that relation to personal past, and collides with historical consciousness. Might these same interpretive practices be used to explore the complexity of the broader social environment, the laws that sustain it, and the legitimacy of this law? Such an adaptation would necessitate that metaphoric competence be circulated in a manner other than through personal experience with psychoanalysis. The associative thinking that draws on personal history would now need to resonate with a broader audience and the narratives (founding myths, etc.) that define that community. The case histories might seem an obvious first place to look for such broader cultural effects.

If psychoanalysis reveals the modern crisis of authority, then Freud's case histories perform this crisis.[10] Usually, the encounter of another person (a patient, a stranger, a friend, the subject of a history) implies some first steps taken towards establishing a shared horizon of experience. However, the psychoanalytic encounter is premised on the *breakdown* of the usual horizons of intelligibility, and on the absence of governing conventions – or even criteria for conventions – of how to make sense of what another person says. The presentation of analytic sessions in case histories or anecdotes must make this breakdown and subsequent interactions

[9] My turn to "narrative capacity" is a turn away from symbolic law, one that problematizes the relationship between intersubjectivity and Freud's ontogenetic claims about the repetition of primal phantasies, myths, and so on. Regrettably, I do not have space here to read the effects of this turn back onto the cultural imaginary and its role in psychic life. For more on this point, see Susann Heenen-Wolff, "From Symbolic Law to Narrative Capacity: A Paradigm Shift in Psychoanalysis?" in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 88 (2007): 75–90.

[10] The case histories originate in the patient presentations given at Wednesday meetings of fellow practitioners in Freud's home. Freud used these meetings as sounding boards for his ideas, and as informal means to keep tabs on those working alongside him. With the histories, Freud sought to engage a variety of audiences: his acolytes and competitors, other analysts attending his subsequent lectures abroad, as well as the wider lay public.

comprehensible for a reading audience.[11] In addition, with an eye toward analytic training, these case histories must make a specific kind of theoretical contribution: they must present a denaturalizing technique that has broader clinical value. Differently put, the strategies of denaturalization used must be susceptible of being naturalized as "analytic competences" – those kinds of normative skills peculiar to the analytic setting. Compensating for the breakdown of normative horizon thus opens an unusual challenge: the challenge of speaking to communities of readers (analytic and lay readers) with different organizing norms and criteria for evaluation, and not just to readers with different levels of expertise.

Before beginning a case history, the author-analyst must ask: for whom, exactly, are the case histories to be recounted? That is, does the analyst appeal to common opinion, professional expertise, or to something else? The temptation of this approach would be to read the analyst into the position of a "master narrator" able to shape and guide the patient's account, with the danger that the analyst will re-inscribe the patient in dominant cultural frameworks of interpretation.[12] The analytic scene is slippery. On the one hand, the patient distorts the analyst as an effigy of authorities past. On the other, Freud cautions that the author-analyst exercise reticence in being "perfectly compassionate and objectively intimate."[13] These

[11] For an illuminating issue on the practical impossibility of obtaining legitimate "consent," as well as an intriguing discussion of confidentiality, privacy and secrecy in psychoanalysis, see *Confidentiality: Ethical Perspectives and Clinical Dilemmas*, ed. Charles Levin, Allannah Furlong, and Mary K. O'Neill (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Analytic Press, 2003).

[12] Contemporary analysts are well aware of the dilemmas posed by case histories and their publication is a lively ethical debate and cause for serious review by editorial boards. On the one hand, they are invaluable opportunities to revisit and revise key theories; confidentiality restrictions make it difficult for analysts to talk readily and in full about patients. At the same time, analysts are aware of the potential for case histories to disrupt the therapeutic process (even if analysis has terminated), and for them to objectify patients. As an alternative, some analysts have turned to the "clinical vignette" as something that illustrates a theoretical point but cannot easily be attached to any particular patient. For more on the history of case histories see Jan Goldstein, "The Case History in Historical Perspective: Nanette Leroux and Emmy von N." in *Storms in her Head*, ed. Muriel Dimen and Adrienne Harris (New York: Other Press, 2001); the stunning 1820s manuscript reprinted and analyzed in her *Hysteria Beside Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Charles Levin, "Civic Confidentiality and Psychoanalytic Confidentiality" and Jonathan Lear, "Confidentiality as a Virtue," both in *Confidentiality: Ethical Perspectives and Clinical Dilemmas*, ed. Charles Levin, Allannah Furlong, and Mary K. O'Neil (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Analytic Press, 2003). For more on the conventions of reading case histories, see the excellent *Storms in Her Head*, ed. Muriel Dimen and Adrienne Harris (New York: Other Press, 2001).

[13] Such is anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann's description in *Of Two Minds* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 111.

paradoxical qualities indicate the challenge faced by the analyst as she reads those relationships, multiple and overlapping, that implicate herself and her patient, and seeks to rewrite these for another's eyes. Ought, then, distortions be "corrected" for the absent reader of the case histories so as to maintain a stability in perspective?

The striking *lack* of narrative authority in Freud's case histories is thus all the more surprising. The authorial voice of these histories is remarkably uneven. This lack of authority is apparent not only in those moments where Freud bemoans these writerly dilemmas, but also, and more compellingly, in those passages that manifest a striking shift in interpretive registers. In considering whether the Rat-Man's story of childhood sexual misdeeds was real (as originally posited) or phantasy, Freud notes the uncertainty and works through its challenge in an extensive two-page footnote. The footnote moves from clinical generalization ("in psychoanalyses we frequently come across…"), to historical assessment ("in our judgment of historical reality"), to mythologizing ("tales of a prehistoric past"). Faced by the abruptly seized ending imposed by the Rat-Man, Freud notes rather defensively that "It was impossible to unravel this tissue of phantasy thread by thread; the therapeutic success of the treatment was precisely what stood in the way of this. The patient recovered, and his ordinary life began to assert its claims… *I am not to be blamed*, therefore, for this gap in the analysis."[14] Within this lengthy footnote, the register for Freud's own voice shifts repeatedly, one might even say uneasily, from that of participant in an analytic encounter, to that of educator of his reading public (speaking in the voice of an implied third-person), to finally asserting his own personal subjectivity: *I am not to be blamed*. It is curious that this particular change between narrative positions of the analyst occurs within a footnote and so displaces some amount of narrative uncertainty beyond the body of the text. Still present, the uncertainty itself cannot be fully confronted and explained, even as Freud standardly calls attention to his interpretive misgivings. The displacement of these claims about scenes of address, about exactitude in interpretation, and analytic technique, however, suggests Freud's uncertainty in his own ability to stage-manage the game of hide-and-seek between claim and meaning, or even to clarify his own subject-position. Instead, the defensive footnote qualifies the main text and attests to Freud's singular inability to establish a stable text dominated by the voice of the impersonal narrator

[14] *Three Case Histories*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996), 47. Emphasis added.

or scientific authority. Freud's responses to Rat-Man – and perhaps his own self-narration – continue to be inflected by the singularity of his position and the personal nature of the analytic scene of address. The patient's legibility does not emerge from confrontation with an impersonal set of norms condensed in the person or position of the analyst; the social conditions for the emergence of this legibility are otherwise.

The temptation when faced with the collapse of horizons of intelligibility would be for the reader to call for more or better information so as to arrive at more accurate renderings of the patient, and thus to distinguish more from least effective analytic treatments. Yet these calls for more information about famous patients, or to record and make available transcripts from analytic sessions, miss some of its fundamental point – namely, that analytic sessions themselves are not structured on the same premises of narrative drama, which must necessarily have a forward-moving plot, narrative tension surrounding disruptive events and their possible resolutions, and an ending that asserts or reasserts a conventional schema that allows for the hour to be brought to conclusion. Analysts themselves have commented variously on analysis: that it is boring, that the first two years or so of analysis are riddled with mistakes in question, tempo, and understanding, that certain tropes tend to repeat and transmute across the entirety of the sessions.[15] In short, these interactions are perhaps like the unstructured back-and-forth that characterizes conversations between those who know each other all too well, and where the most important topics hover in the background, displaced by minutiae. The key difference in this comparison is not that analytic minutiae are more meaning-laden – fraught conversations avoiding long-simmering problems might have the same appearance – but that neither party fully grasps *how* they are meaning-laden. To use language borrowed from Roland Barthes, the form and the meaning of a symbolic event are off to play hide-and-seek.[16] Usual relations that stabilize history – relations of causality, especially – are suspended during analysis. In writing case histories, author-analysts ultimately must stabilize the relationship between narrative form and affective content. And, unavoidably, that entails privileging the analyst's perspective.

[15] For an excellent anthropological take on the training and professions of psychoanalysis, psychotherapeutics and psychiatry, see *Of Two Minds* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

[16] In commenting on the persistence of meaning, and the alternation between meaning and form as necessary to preserve the differentiation of signifier and signified, Barthes comments, "It is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth." *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), 118.

Another tact might be to emphasize the scientific, rather than the literary, value of the case history, and seek to present as complete an account possible. Readers could then approach the material from whatever perspective they wished. Here the Wolf-Man case offers an unusual opportunity to assess the tension between analyst and patient. Published now in a collected volume entitled *Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man*, it is possible to read Freud's original case history and his two subsequent additional analyses, the follow-up analysis conducted some years later by Ruth Mack Brunswick, and the breathless account by Muriel Gardiner of her role in securing the Wolf-Man a Nansen passport in order to smuggle him out of Nazi-occupied Austria so that he could continue his analysis with Brunswick in New York.[17] The volume further contains the Wolf-Man's own recollections about Freud and the original analysis, as well as a brief autobiography, or memoir, of the relevant events that emerged in analysis. The temptation is to view such materials as the Wolf-Man suggests: as a "more complete" account.

Yet the book opens with a claim that functions as a warning. Anna Freud, in her comments introducing the Wolf-Man, notes that analysts want to know too much about their patients, and can hardly transmit this knowledge to the broader public. The tools of analysis, she writes, "produce a mass of data about the patient's life history, the health and the pathological sides of his nature, which, due to its bulk, is unwieldy and, if written up in undigested form, unreadable."[18] Insofar as analysis results from the contact of the unconscious of two people, it would seem difficult for a third-party not present at the scene to discern and participate in its horizon. Transcripts cannot capture their intensity; the condensation of meaning around key events, responses, and enactments results from a palpable intensification of their symbolic significance. Insofar as this intensity is conveyed affectively through behavior, intonation, or inflection it cannot be captured.[19] Simply put, analysis rests on a

[17] *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man* (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

[18] See Anna Freud's Preface in *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), ix. A subsequent call for the publications of transcripts of analytic was submitted by Donald Spence in *Historical and Narrative Truth* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982) and rebutted by analysts Barry Magid in "The Rhetorical Voice of Psychoanalysis," *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 24 (1996): 365–367; and also Louis Sass and Robert Woolfolk in "Psychoanalysis and the Hermeneutic Turn: A Critique of Narrative and Historical Truth," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 36 (1988): 429–454.

[19] Donald Spence, "Perils and Pitfalls of Free Floating Attention," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 20 (1984): 37–58; Donald Spence, *Narrative and Historical Truth* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982); "Narrative Appeal vs. Historical Validity," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 25 (1989): 517–523.

dimension of personal exchange that reminds us that discourse is more than text.

Both the literary and the scientific strategies of reading Freud's case histories cede authority to the analyst, either as master narrator or as scientist. Each strategy, however, skews the understanding of psychoanalytic technique and strains against the other. If, as literary theorist Peter Brooks has argued, the Freudian masterplots tease with their seductive promise of consummated discoveries and climactic resolution, then they accomplish these effects by succumbing to the conceit of instinctual satisfaction.[20] The reader tracks the patient in his movement from passivity to activity – from Watsonian befuddlement to Holmesian perspicacity – until the explosive movement of discovery and discharge – an activity whose experience is short-lived and whose indeterminacy is supplanted by finitude and closure. Although readers might better understand how repetitions offer "a space of postponement, error and partial revelation,"[21] the implicit promise is that closure will, definitively, arrive with "its final discharge more effective."[22] Brooks writes, "The sense of a beginning, then, must in some important way be determined by the sense of the ending."[23] Read back against politics and political theory, the relational practices necessary to sustain self-cultivation and to endure its discomforts – discomforts covered over by the erotics of reading – become over-written. By contrast, to approach the case histories scientifically would require invoking the scientific logic of justification – to seek conviction by inserting what has been discovered into a moral and causal order so as to frame the discovery as worthy in some way.[24] Read back to political theory, such a strategy would reinforce norms by subsuming particulars under general rule. Where the first strategy requires insisting on the density and opacity of meaning, the second validates its findings by transforming the invisible into insight. Again, the literary and scientific dimensions of the case histories strain against one another.

Strategies of resistance to interpretive closure become undone by the conventions of public narrative. These conventions drive for the patient

[20] Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*. See also Teresa de Lauretis, "Drive and Narrative," in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1984).

[21] Brooks, *Reading*, 92.

[22] Brooks, *Reading*, 108.

[23] Brooks, *Reading*, 94.

[24] For more on this point, see Jessica Benjamin, "The Primal Leap of Psychoanalysis, From Body to Speech: Freud, Feminism, and the Vicissitudes of the Transference," in *Shadow of the Other*.

to become re-created as an object of knowledge rather than left in the register of imperfect legibility. And yet, to the extent possible, Freud refuses that kind of objectification. Insistently, Freud presents his cases in a partial light: Dora is "a fragment of a case of hysteria." Against the request of the Wolf-Man, Freud presents only the "infantile history of obsessional neurosis" rather than the entirety of the psychoanalytic case.[25] The history of the Rat-Man is composed of "fragmentary extracts"[26] that have "curtailed so drastically the history of the case and of its treatment."[27] Repeatedly Freud calls attention to the impossibility of sequential ordering (of the treatment, of the neurosis, of the events implicating the patient) and the impossibility of making the structure of the neurosis "visible to others through the mass of therapeutic work superimposed upon it."[28] And there is his appeal, along with Anna Freud's, for therapists to resist the temptation for more information about these quickly classic studies. He urges that these case histories be read as a resource for psychoanalytic technique and its process, rather than to satisfy the urge to know if Freud "got it right." Since Freud, analysts have sought to balance the divergent therapeutics, hermeneutic, and scientific goals of analysis. The formal need to present a case history – as a lesson for other analysts, a novelty for lay audiences, an effort to theory-produce – strains against the treatments' attention to "messy middles" rather than origins or closures.[29] That the cases can be read as both literary and scientific achievements underscores

[25] By contrast, the complete title of Philippe Pinel's 1806 treatise is A Treatise on Insanity, *In which are contained the principles of a new and more practical nosology of maniacal disorders than has yet been offered to the public, exemplified by numerous and accurate historical relations of cases from the author's public and private practice: with plates illustrative of the craniology of maniacs and ideots* [sic]. Emphasis in the original.

[26] *Three Case Histories*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996), 1.

[27] *Three Case Histories*, 2.

[28] *Three Case Histories*, 2.

[29] The challenge of writing case histories is the subject of much thought among analysts. Analysts are deeply sensitive to the question of who "authors" them: the patient (who provides the raw material, and collaborates in treatment) or the analyst (the collaborator who makes this experience available to a reading public). In particular, analysts take care that publication doesn't disturb therapeutic treatment. If the request to publish is made before treatment begins, then it might compromise the establishment of a transference relationship and severely limit the effects of treatment. If the request is made after transference has been established, then the balance of collaboration might shift so as to satisfy the analyst's interpretive wishes. Even if the request is made after the formal conclusion of analysis, it might upset the work of post-analytic settlement. After termination of analysis, the patient's relation to the collaboration changes; it no longer bears the character of a working-through but instead its insights are metabolized into the past. The analyst fades back into a symbolic background and the patient has the sense of

what was suggested in the previous section: that there are two different communities with different sets of organizing norms at play.

These case histories, or *Krankengeschichte*, become an odd kind of history. Their raw material offers no plot, no obvious structure, no clear archetypes to apply. If these case histories are to tell not just the illness of a patient but also the illness of a culture, then they need some more broadly apprehensible structure. For all of the uncertainty of Freud's own case histories, their endings perversely cover over and disguise the very uncertainties that Freud works so hard to build into the analytic encounter. Freud resorts to the narrative conventions associated with happy and unhappy endings. Although the bulk of the Rat-Man case suggests that the Rat-Man "has disintegrated into three personalities," the last sentence directs the reader to a footnote that reassures the reader that "[t]he patient's mental health was restored to him by the analysis which I have reported upon in these pages. Like so many other young men of value and promise, he perished in the Great War."[30] In the instance of the Wolf-Man, the case closes with Freud, in the body of the text, asserting the consonance of phylogenetic and ontogenetic origins, undercut by two more footnotes anxiously insisting once again that it is a "matter of indifference"[31] as to whether or not his primal scene is a primal phantasy. As in the Rat-Man case, the final sentence – a meditation on inheritance that confuses whether inheritance is the result of educated claiming or of natural evolution – also is marked by a footnote that re-inscribes the Wolf-Man in a broader cultural context. First Freud presents a condensed chronology of the neurosis (one that violates his self-imposed prohibition on such sequencing) that asserts his perspective. He then writes that after the successful conclusion of the Wolf-Man's analysis, "I parted from him, regarding him as cured, a few weeks before the unexpected outbreak of the Great War … Since then the patient has felt normal and has behaved unexceptionably, in spite of the war having robbed him of his home, his possessions, and all his family relationships. It may be that his very misery, by gratifying his sense of guilt, contributed to the consolidation of his recovery."[32]

repossessing an autobiographical narrative that was "hers" all along. Publication might well disrupt this process and prompt the patient to doubt that his healing was anything more than the instrumentalization of care. See Charles Levin's "Civic Confidentiality and Psychoanalytic Confidentiality" and Jonathan Lear's "Confidentiality as a Virtue," both in *Confidentiality: Ethical Perspectives and Clinical Dilemmas*, ed. Charles Levin, Allannah Furlong, and Mary K. O'Neil (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Analytic Press, 2003).

[30] *Three Case Histories*, 81.

[31] *Three Case Histories*, 279.

[32] *Three Case Histories*, 280.

Both unhappy endings, to be sure, but ones that indirectly report and reassure of the "realism" of "the way of the world."[33] In each case, the patient is "cured," even as Freud usually avoids the categorical language of sickness turned to health and of disease met with cure.[34] Despite these personal successes, Freud conservatively reads his efforts against the cruelties of human destruction. As readers of the case histories, we are encouraged to re-inscribe the apparent inscrutability of the Rat-Man and the Wolf-Man as heroic individuals framed against the "weather of war." Coherence of social order is maintained. Happy endings have their own easily recognizable narrative conventions that preserve a formal symmetry in accounts by responding to disruption with the reassertion of a stabilizing symbolic order. Unhappy endings respond to disruption by naturalizing it and appealing to "realism" so as to impose narrative finality and closure, while leaving open the possibility that a more substantive harmony between events and values, individuals, and social structures might yet be achieved. They operate through postponement and through the displacement of narrative authority to someplace beyond the text, or in this instance, beyond the social context.

Are strategies of interpretive resistance of no public use? Absent a faithful replication of the therapeutic relationship, a reader might instead draw on projective identification to understand the failures of therapeutic and political action both. Wendy Brown's essay "A Child is Being Beaten" offers an excellent account of how a common fantasy of violence might be read so as to "allegorize a historical-political problem,"[35] and understand the persistence of injurious identities. Reading Freud against Brooks, Brown instead asks what might be the "replacement for liberatory desire"[36] in both our acts and their narration. Brown writes powerfully about when this moment of liberatory closure fails. Both drawn to and repulsed by the symbolic injuries of others, the uninjured become invested in injurious identities for their predictability. They remain invested because of the ambiguous nature of their attachment (neither avowed nor denied, these attachments evoke both affinity and guilt, and so are hard to dispatch) and because these identities become the terms of cultural legibility. Instead, there is a "turning *away* from the difficult work of freedom – work that is risky in its transformative relation with the

[33] The terms are from Goethe's *Faust*, and their framing from Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World* (New York: Verso, 2000).

[34] See, for example, the essay "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," in SE 23.

[35] Wendy Brown, "Desire – The Desire to Be Punished: Freud's 'A Child is Being Beaten,'" in *Politics out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 47.

[36] Brown, "Desire," 46.

past, its encounter with power, and its venture into making an uncontrollable future."[37] Such a reading has its limits. The extent to which readers find Brown's example persuasive depends on, first, their ability to own up to ambivalent feelings (against the psychic tendency to cover these up and to manage any resulting guilt). Second, and somewhat differently, Brown could be read as offering a diagnostic redescription of reality – one that uses psychoanalytic language to allegorize difficult-to-acknowledge feelings – but this reading also depends on whether readers trust Brown's personal authority. Where resistance in the clinical encounter serves as the motor for interpersonal trust, textual resistance lacks the same containing space in which to be worked through. Unstructured by the tensile resistance of the clinical encounter, the experience of reading dissipates before the authorization of injurious identity can be questioned.

In his other writings, Freud acknowledges the dilemma of audience by theorizing it: in his pamphlet "Conversations with an Impartial Person,"[38] Freud imagines an authorial audience, ventriloquizes their responses, and uses these skepticisms to move his account forward. The pamphlet – written to rebut charges of quackery – is also an effort to create an audience responsive to the conventions organizing psychoanalytic practice. Effectively, the reader is invited to stand in for the suspicious patient who counters the analyst's reality principle with her own, and whose resistances bind, attach, and create the presence of a past. In writing the case histories, Freud cannot easily have recourse to this method: as the previous paragraphs make clear, readers of the histories are unable to challenge what was left out or misinterpreted, let alone to the more subtle effects of pacing, emotional charge, or the mere decision to write up the treatment. If the patient can trust the analyst precisely because her authority is *not* decisive, then the reader must find different reasons to trust the author-analyst. In adapting these clinical practices of psychoanalysis for a broader public, the question of trust in authority resurges.

And so Freud becomes, as Claude Lévi-Strauss notes, "an example and a lesson."[39] Having provided individuals with the interpretive tools necessary for legibility in the face of cultural dissonance, Freud comes

[37] Brown, "Desire," 46.

[38] The subtitle to Freud's essay on amateur psychoanalysis "The Question of Lay Analysis" is subtitled "Conversations with an Impartial Person." Throughout the essay, Freud references this person and his substantive and emotional responses to Freud's claims (cf. p. 187). This essay, originally entitled "Psychoanalysis and Quackery" is the pamphlet Freud wrote in response to the charges filed against Theodore Reik (discussed in Chapter 2). "Question of Lay Analysis," in SE 20.

[39] *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), 490ff.

exceedingly close to calling for a poly-vocality that would postpone the finality of cultural narrative. A more radical position would instead investigate the exuberant disorderliness attendant on the diffusion of interpretive authority. It would more insistently ask by what mechanisms (and in reference to which cultural authorities) individual interpretations or "readings" aggregate into collective twice-told tales. The manner in which Freud fails at this task, however, is instructive. Mere exposure to interpretive resistance is not enough. The uncertainties of the case histories collapse back into naturalization when cognitive understanding of a problem cannot be leveraged against the interpretive frameworks that either Freud or his readers bring to bear on the text. Much as the success of Brown's allegory depends on readers' abilities to "turn *toward* the difficult work of freedom," the effect of the case histories is itself indeterminate. Simply urging these strategies is not enough. Teaching them at least endows persons with the narrative capacities *necessary* to do more, although it does not ensure that they will "venture into making an uncontrollable future." These failures are less interpretive dead-ends than postponements of a different sort. They are postponements of a problem for which there are not yet resources to move past. Such a postponement need not be a middling one of acquiescence. More profitably, it can offer an endurance of the discomfort of explanations that, in unsettling, dissatisfy and push persons to turn elsewhere for inspiration. They are themselves subject to denaturalization and analysis of the sort that might make their own endings a project of re-reading and new beginnings.

Where do these reflections leave us? Following Freud, psychoanalysis remains a lively interpretive tradition organized around, but not limited by, its founding author. Foucault comments aptly that "[t]he work of initiators of discursivity is not situated in the space the science defines; rather it is the science, or the discursivity, which refers back to their work as the primary points of reference."[40] Yet Foucault's comment does not quite capture the extent of the discursive world that Freud created and the radical resistance his clinical practices authorized. Prior to Freud, doctors effected a forced congruence of moral, medical, and social orders within the alternate world of the asylum.[41] Illegible on usual social terms – and

[40] Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology.* vol. 2 of *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–84*, ed. James Faubion and Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1998).

[41] Foucault acknowledges this forced congruence of orders when he writes that Freud was "the first to consent not to look away nor to investigate elsewhere, the first not to attempt to hide it in a psychiatric theory that more or less harmonized with the rest of

so potentially a threat to rational order – the mad were inscribed within an alternate social world. Asylum guards were selected on the basis of their physical appearance and moral stamina, while servants were chosen on the basis of their ability to inhabit both the social roles of guardian and servant. "Cure" entailed a patient's capacity to be "restored to his family."[42] Freud did more than simply "privatize" this situation so as to accommodate the more delicate sensibilities of a fading aristocracy. If the famed Charcot barely examined patients himself – he relied on the observations and comments made by the staff of Salpêtrière – then for Freud to insist on lengthy consultations with patients (and to be responsive to their demands to talk more) was quite a lot. Not only did Freud remove the doctor–patient couple from the clinic, but their now-dynamic interaction acknowledged competing, incongruent moral, medical, and social orders.[43]

Freud's psychoanalytic practices introduce the possibility for the audience to resist and revise the terms of discourse. Although its potential is unrealized by Freud, this resistance extends from patients to readers. Differently from Philippe Pinel, Freud's case histories are not so bound by cultural context that they must be read on its terms. One to three pages in length, Pinel's early case histories read like an anthropological investigation of an exotic species of human being.[44] Absent any voice other than the narrator, they never offered the possibility of challenging their interpretive order. With Freud, some 100 years after the notoriety of Anna O. and Dora, readers are more likely to identify with the patients than with the knowing analyst, contrary to textual cues.[45] We can recognize that

medical knowledge; the first to follow its consequences with absolute rigor" (*MC*, 277). Prior to Freud, "the physician could exercise his absolute authority in the world of the asylum only insofar as, from the beginning, he was Father and Judge, Family and Law – his medical practice being for a long time no more than a complement to the old rites of Order, Authority, and Punishment." *MC*, 272.

42 In his *Treatise on Insanity*, Pinel uses this phrase to close his *historiettes* on three occasions. *A Treatise on Insanity*, trans. D. D. Davis (Sheffield, England: W. Todd, 1806), 61, 89, and 193.

43 A fascinating analysis of the confluence of moral and scientific orders can be found in Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). See also Goldstein's essay "The Case History in Historical Perspective," in *Storms in Her Head*.

44 Balzac and Stendhal avidly read Pinel as research for character development (and Pinel himself modeled his *historiettes* on the moralist La Bruyère). Allen Thiher, *Revels in Madness: Insanity in Medicine and Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

45 Jessica Benjamin, "The Primal Leap of Psychoanalysis, From Body to Speech: Freud, Feminism, and the Vicissitudes of the Transference," in *Shadow of the Other*.

by reading them a particular way we also are authorizing a particular relationship to authority, the casting of its hierarchies (gender and otherwise), and its competing therapeutic, scientific, and literary contexts.

The siting of psychoanalytic practice, however, limits the scope of this authorization. Psychoanalysis commends itself as an incipient authorial practice precisely because it lacks an emphasis on resolution, closures, or overriding convention. Yet the same traits that enable therapeutic action disable the extension of its practices into empirical inquiry or collective political and social action. Those who have sought a more political scope for psychoanalysis sometimes leverage its occasional use of the language of witness and testimony. In the context of trauma studies, for example, Shoshana Felman builds on the associations of witnessing a trauma, bearing witness to it before others, or giving witness testimony at a public hearing. All share an important relation to truth, says Felman. She limns the testimony to psychic trauma as "a contained and culturally channeled, institutionalized *crisis of truth*. The trial both derives from and proceeds by, a crisis of evidence, which the verdict must resolve."[46] Re-siting psychoanalytic exchange onto the model of a trial more clearly engages legal and political subjectivities. This engagement, however, effaces the shared authorship of the analytic encounter, the one that grounds this very challenge to legal subjectivity.[47] Although "testimony" seeks to counter the power of an "event [that] produced no witnesses,"[48] its formal structure shapes the patient's speech into "material evidence for truth."[49] In Felman's work on the Holocaust, the prolixity of revisionist theories means that demands for accuracy, material truths, or narrative coherence resonate differently. Nonetheless, narrative coherence might not be apt for every situation. The emphasis on closure might close down interpretive exchange too soon, it might leave narrative authority implied and unscrutinized, it might leave the *authority* of narrative in the hands of those governing.

Adapting psychoanalytic practices for politics, then, is not simply a matter of advocating an authorial sensibility and then "scaling it up" for

[46] Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis," in *Testimony* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 6.

[47] Even though Felman's collaborator Dori Laub writes with extraordinary sensitivity to the demands of "bearing" and "listening" that move witnessing across multiple domains, the language of "testimony" erases the collaborative process of working-through. Dori Laub is a psychoanalyst who works with Holocaust survivors, and is a child survivor himself. "Bearing Witness," in *Testimony* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

[48] Dori Laub, "An Event without a Witness," in *Testimony*, 80.

[49] Felman, "Education and Crisis," in *Testimony*, 5.

public audience. Freud's clinical writings underscore both the difficulty of achieving ethical self-transformation of any kind and the fact that these changes depend on relational dynamics more than good intentions or readerly sophistication. The shifting registers of the case histories, and the fragmented, messy middles of the analytic encounter, suggest that moderns need agility in moving between interpretive registers. The slippery narrative authority of the case histories suggests a more insistent and intractable need to think about audience reception. To move authorship closer to authoritative political engagement would seem to require that public audiences recognize their authorial status and find a means to ground its claims to legitimacy.

## Spectacles about the Scaffold

Initially, searching for such public practices in Foucault's work appears a mistake, if not an anathema. It is worth remembering that Foucault himself never refers to "the public" or the "the private" spheres.[50] Instead, he concentrates his critical attention on the normative concepts that theorists of the public sphere value – freedom, autonomy, justice, inclusion – and on the political structures through which these concepts find their elaboration. More often, Foucault talks in terms of relations – relations between the governing and the governed, as well as the entwined relations of power and knowledge – and in terms of networks of discourse – comprised of agents, institutions, texts, and so forth. References to concepts such as "freedom" become a means to make and evaluate current configurations of relations of power rather than absolute ends in themselves. Here I would argue that Foucault's earlier work (with its insistence on discourse and meaning) and his late work (with its insistence on relationships and knowledge) go far toward reconceptualizing the role for *public audiences* in the interpretive processes of authorization. Rather than construing publics as a spatially specific site or according to certain identifying characteristics, Foucault focuses on those discursive relationships that contribute to public processes of valorization. He emphasizes these interpretive practices over categorical membership or exclusion.

Most readers remember the racy opening pages of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* – the dramatic recounting of the fate of poor

[50] While Foucault certainly would not deny that the usual distinction of public and private is characterized by hierarchies that bear real political costs, his emphasis on relations insists that only better and worse permutations of these hierarchies exist.

Damiens as he is first condemned for the crime of regicide and then maladroitly drawn-and-quartered in the execution of his sentence before a public audience.[51] The retelling of his plight provides a vivid demonstration of Foucault's central thesis – that the exercise of sovereign power has shifted from its immediate exercise on the body to the more subtle contouring of discipline and normalization. Less well-remembered are the pages following *Discipline*'s vivisectional prelude, in which Foucault notes that Damiens's audience has the option either to affirm the display of sovereign power or to erupt in "disturbances around the scaffold."[52] This chapter moves from the body of the condemned to the collective body of the interpretive public and its participation in the spectacle of the scaffold. The crowd, in these moments, possessed the authority to overturn the sentences handed down. And so executions opened up a fleeting public space in which the criminal could speak freely and without inhibition, to either the jeers or the cheers of the crowd. Freed from their workday constraints and united by the atmosphere of spectacle, members of the crowd could either identify with the criminal and feel solidarity with other unfortunates, or could reiterate the condemnation of the sovereign and so participate in his political power. More radically, the crowd might also reject these choices and their criteria. Final interpretive authority rests with them.

In these moments of public unrest and interpretive uncertainty, is this crowd a public? Certainly in such moments the crowd operates in public spaces, and participates in those kinds of festival-like behavior that historians such as François Furet and Mona Ozouf have worked to associate with the creation of public citizens during the French Revolution.[53] In the account given by Foucault, their activities even gave rise to a literary genre that used these minor tales of unrest to contribute to a broader discourse that glorified the "heroic criminal." These crowds thus had sufficient group cohesion to give rise to a body of literature defined by a recognizable set of literary conventions. And yet, from Foucault's account at least, it is unclear if these crowds recognized *themselves* as publics, if their authority (both political and interpretive) could be considered a reflexive one, or what kinds of norms might be said to organize and regulate them.

[51] "The Spectacle of the Scaffold," in *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 32–69.

[52] *DP*, 60.

[53] François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution, 1789–1799*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Through these opening pages, Foucault performs the need for an audience able to interpret and respond appropriately to the spectacle before them. But how did this crowd come to confirm or overturn the decisions of the sovereign? Why did individuals in the crowd trust that their response would be replicated by the response of others? Could this kind of "resistance" ever become more substantive and enduring? To answer these questions, one would need an account of how personal relationships aggregate into something reasonably understood as a public audience, and how this audience comes to recognize interpretive conventions as collectively shared. For this public audience to be more than an assemblage of individuals, and for it to render common judgments, would require it to share a commonly-held orientation to knowledge and shared system of meaning. Yet Foucault critiques just such epistemic communities from *The Order of Things* onward. What about these communities, their interpretive techniques, and their referential bodies of knowledge has changed?

To some extent, Foucault's earlier disparaging claim about authors outlines the parameters of the challenge. Recall that in *What is an Author?* the ability of audience members to participate in and contextualize discourse initially appears to be bounded by key figures of cultural authority. Foucault claims that "the author does not precede the works, he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. […] The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning."[54] However, the limitation here is less the authorial figure than the audience's appeal to his authority in order to "limit, exclude, and choose" what they hear. If that essay concentrated primarily on the function played by authors in marking, regulating, and delimiting the circulation of discourse, its closing lines are curious. These lines shift perspective from a neutral summary of the author-function to an ethical register, voiced in the third-person plural, in which "we" fear the proliferation of meaning. Through most of the essay, Foucault adopts the perspective of the dispassionate critic and his analysis reverses perspective to place Foucault alongside what might otherwise appear to be a hapless or gullible reader

[54] "What Is an Author?" in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, vol. 2 of *The Essential Works of Foucault*, ed. James Faubion and Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1998).

of texts. In making the distinction between critic and audience – in which the critic controls text and meaning and the audience remains silent – Foucault hints that the interpretive position of the audience must change. At the very least, individuals must not fear the proliferation of meaning such that they limit their public discourse to the common opinion with which they are already familiar, and hide behind the authority of others. More than this disposition to steadiness they need a different set of interpretive techniques than those that "limit, exclude, and choose." They need what Foucault will later name as *lexis,* or a way of reading people and events. Achieving this personal disposition and these public practices requires a turn not to leaders or isolated author-critics but a turn to the training of public audience.

Much as the readers of Freud's case histories needed to master a set of interpretive conventions, members of a public audience must learn a set of norms and conventions that signal which events, personages, and claims ought be considered as important.[55] By "public audience," then, I refer to that body engaged in the process of mastering the interpretive conventions and governing norms appropriate to their context. Foucault's interest lies in democratizing this training – through both reading and practice – so as to influence relations of governance.[56] Starting with *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, he begins to theorize the "literary competences" of individuals and, eventually, public audiences. Through the ascetic practices of listening (and their complements in reading and writing) outlined by Epicurus, Foucault begins to develop the reversal of critical perspective first signaled in the closing lines of *What Is an Author?* Foucault excavates an account of how individuals might be trained as readers not just of texts but of the people and events of their present (*l'actualité*) to move *parrhesia*'s ethical practices closer to public effect. Unexpectedly, however, Foucault initiates this new critical attitude in the silence and interpretive techniques associated with the "art of listening" expected of student-practitioners of *parrhesia*.

Initially, the silent listening of an audience might seem to encourage passivity in the face of dominant speakers and to reinforce the audience's

[55] Although she does not draw the analogy to politics and public audience, Kirstie McClure has a provocative chapter on the practices of reading and canon-formation. See "Between the Castigation of Texts and the Excess of Words: Political Theory in the Margins of Tradition," in *Democracy and Vision*, ed. Aryeh Botwinick and William E. Connolly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Chapter 7 will explore the transition between reading books and reading people and events more fully.

[56] Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

structural position of weakness. Certainly listening neither is vocatively expressive nor encourages the development of those bonds that might associate audience members to one another. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault praises Freud for ending the forced silence of psychiatric patients. And yet in these later lectures, Foucault insists that "The transition from *aletheia* to *ethos* (from true discourse to what will be the fundamental rule of conduct) begins of course with listening."[57] Listening becomes the first stage of an intensely reflexive process of internalization that enables individuals to mediate between personal ethics and truth claims that have public purchase. In making this claim, Foucault thus complicates the process of critique by challenging the idea that it is simply a matter of hearing, or considering, the words uttered by a speaker. Instead, Foucault explores the training necessary to participate in audience reception.

Other accounts within political theory have sought to broaden what counts as political speech by examining how plays, orations, dialogues, and public speeches provide different contexts in which to construct and reflect on political community.[58] Such accounts recognize that individuals, as members of a historically specific culture, derive their education in its themes, conventions, forms, and significations from multiple sources, and their cultural education is not always – or even, not usually – a didactic one. Foucault differently intimates that audiences need preparation in order for these political texts to work on them. For the Athenians to be struck by Pericles' oration, to be shamed by Socrates, or to laugh at Socrates alongside Aristophanes requires that they understand how the texts are asking them to respond. In each of these instances, individuals exercise their own training in interpretation to participate in and create collectively shared and meaningful moments. In the instance of *parrhesia*, by slowing the process down and insisting on the elements of silence and listening before claiming comprehension or initiating action, Foucault draws attention to the interpretive space that binds speech – spoken or heard – and principled action into speech-activity. If words are to have ethical effect on their listeners and to move them, they need to open onto a new system of meaning, and yet one in which audience members can still find themselves.

[57] Foucault, *HS,* 334.

[58] See, for example, Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Peter Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory: The Road Not Taken* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); S. Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Christopher Rocco, *Tragedy and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

Citing alternately Epictetus, Plutarch, Seneca, and Philo of Alexandria, Foucault elaborates the different physical postures, attitudes, and techniques of self-discipline considered intrinsic to listening.[59] What seems esoteric or belabored to contemporary readers was, for the ancients, a means by which to school listeners to control and direct their attention so as to respond to the signals of emphasis, ethical evaluation, structure, and coherence given by the speaker – what literary critics might, in more contemporary language refer to as rules of notice, signification, configuration, and coherence.[60] That these practices seem so fusty suggests already a different role for auditors of public discourse in the first few centuries of that era. More than a prohibition on speech, listening is its own activity and functions as an auditory form of the paraphrase. It requires auditors to discern and condense the meaning of what they hear and to move it closer to themselves and their own understanding. The impetus to linger on these parrhesiastic claims heard – be it through meditation, by writing notes in "memory-books" or *hupomnemata*, or through ambulatory exercises[61] – moves the meaning of a text from author to auditor. In the instance of Plutarch, Foucault notes that "good philosophical listening involves a necessary work of attention, of a double and forked attention. On the one hand, a looking towards the *pragma*, towards a specifically philosophical signification in which assertion is equivalent to prescription. And then, on the other, a looking at ourselves in which, memorizing what we have heard, we see it embedding itself and gradually becoming subject in the soul that listens."[62] Good listening enables audience members to hear how they are being called upon and what audience they are invited to join, yet keeps for itself the decision of how to construe and respond to this invitation. It acknowledges the meaning and audience desired by the speaker, without making *this* meaning or *that* audience the only ones possible.

[59] See, especially, Foucault, *HS*, 331–369.

[60] Literary scholar Peter Rabinowitz argues that readers possess interpretive positions that affect their understanding of text before they begin to read; their training in mastery of texts alerts them to rules of notice, signification, configuration, and coherence. In mobilizing these rules to read and understand the text, readers come close to understanding the meaning the text's author hoped to convey; that the author relies on these rules in anticipation of his audience does not preclude them from misunderstanding his effect and using these same rules to construct some alternate meaning. My attempts to think through the "art of listening" and its political and ethical effects is much indebted to this fascinating exploration of reading and narrative conventions. See Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998 [1987]).

[61] For details on these exercises, see *Care of the Self*.

[62] Foucault, *HS*, 351.

Such careful listening prompts auditors to attend more carefully to the implications of what is said. It asks them to identify the interpretive regime mediating speakers and listeners. More specifically it asks them to heed the framing techniques used to characterize a problematic, the criteria for judgment arrogated to the implied public audience, the world created in words, and the over-arching narrative used to structure a set of claims. It realizes that "when we employ the *logos* there is necessarily a *lexis* (a way of saying things) and the choice of particular words rather than others. Therefore, there can be no philosophic *logos* without this kind of body of language with its own qualities, its own figures, and its own necessary effects at the level of *pathos*."[63] In giving a place for the mode of speech and its emotional effect, Foucault is not saying that emotion should be privileged over *logos* or that *logos* has irrevocably harmful effects; instead, he urges individuals to be aware of their interpretive position and of how words seek to work on them. *Lexis* mediates between *logos* and *ergon*. The ability to engage this *lexis* – the structures of intelligibility invoked earlier – contributes to the formation of public audience.

From the relationships between speakers and auditors of that present arises a profound sense of the interpretive space of community. Embedded in this silence is an ambivalence between keeping interpretive authority to (and for?) oneself and the power of choosing to attribute it to another. Listening and being trained in the *lexis* employed by others has value in the way it returns individuals to the relationships that constitute their present context, and prompts them to a "knowing differently." Using the example of a simple aphorism from Virgil – "Time flies, time beyond repair" – Foucault takes several pages to work through the associations to be possibly built by different interpretive perspectives. Grammarians, philologists, and philosophers will each approach this sentence differently: grammarians might focus on its formal structure, philologists on its comparison to other comments by Virgil. Only philosophers, claims Foucault, will move beyond the text to the world. Attuned to the world of human relationships, such philosophic listening will "gradually, by meditating on it, by transforming it piece by piece into a precept of action, [is capable of] arriving at a rule not only for one's conduct, but for living generally, and making this affirmation something engraved in our soul like an oracle."[64] As an auditory paraphrase, listening is the first step towards rewriting "precepts of action."

[63] Foucault, *HS*, 368.
[64] Foucault, *HS,* 350.

It is important to recall that Foucault associates the emergence of parrhesiastic practices with the transfer of ethical responsibility for meaning from the gods to humans, and the transfer of political responsibility from private families to the public domain. His readings of ancient tragedies, rather quickly abandoned, focus almost exclusively on this transfer of meaning-laden responsibility to human affairs as organized through speech and justification.[65] Facing up to this task requires a sober disposition characterized by intrepid capacities in assembling and assessing the significance of others' public claims. It also requires the ability to distinguish what is one's own from circumstances, where "one's own" are those criteria and standards to which one gives value rather than deferring to dominant opinion or the whims of context. Cognizant of their role in the composition of interpretation, and of the gap between the audience that the speaker interpellates and the audience they are, individual audience members slowly come to direct the proliferation of meaning rather than being directed by it.

Foucault thus seeks a reversal in critical perspective, in which what matters in publics is not the reasoned perspective of the intellectual or narrative authority but the seasoned response of the audience. By emphasizing the signal importance of audience rather than critic, he additionally moves away from his earlier writings on the "specific intellectual" toward a dynamic of critique dependent on interactive relationships. In the context of literary competence, Jonathan Culler has described this turn to audience as a way to "avoid premature foreclosure – the unseemly rush from word to world."[66] Such insistence on the structured roles attached to these different interpretive positions slows down the production of meaning by inserting the act of reflexive interpretation. Not only does it preserve the aesthetic experience of the activity of politics, and the distinction between its daily negotiations and its cultural signification, it changes the ability of citizens (and not just leaders) to address of political problems. Insistence on the critical activation of audience members alters the dynamics that govern the circulation of discourse. It shifts critical weight to the seemingly passive spectators, and so begins to democratize the process of political judgment and authorization.

[65] Foucault treats several tragedies by Euripides in the lectures published in *Fearless Speech*; in *The Government of Self and Others*, he speaks only (and at some length) about *Ion*, but concentrates primarily on Creusa's demand on Apollo to speak, Apollo's refusal, and the shift of illocutionary responsibility from the divine to the *polis* throughout the course of the play. *GS*, 76ff.

[66] Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge, 1975), 151.

## Toward Judgment in Common

These techniques associated with listening get us closer to understanding how audience *members* paraphrase and understand the discourses they hear. But how do these audience members come to recognize themselves as sharing a *collective*, perhaps authoritative, identity? Earlier, Freud hesitated on exactly this question, unable to square analytic competences with normative critique. Even as individuals might have the capacity to invoke interpretive discretion, some further element must be present for these individual capacities to aggregate into collectively held conventions. These conventions must be strong enough to provide a shared system of meaning (or poetics, to borrow from literary studies) and yet individuals must be distant enough from them so as to engage in critique. What, if not family, political borders, or ethnic ties, provides that sense of commonalty?

For audiences to become authoritative means that their members must share a common body of knowledge and recognize it as binding in a given context. That different contexts consciously invoke different kinds of knowledge in the service of rule-governed dynamics should not be a surprise. Already, Foucault's earlier work sought to distinguish the universalizing *savoir* from the local *connaissances* in his analysis of the classfication schemes that mediate political and social orders. Where *savoir* asserts its authority through its universal reach, the local *connaissances* offer criteria of evaluation that are context-driven, and sometimes practice-based. Each body of knowledge differently grounds claims to authority.

Similarly, Foucault speaks to the poetic aspect of commonly shared judgment by linking parrhesiastic practices to a particular body of practical knowledge, *phusiologia*, itself connected to common "matters of the world," or nature (*phusis*). Reading against the grain of standard accounts of *phusis*,[67] Foucault situates *phusiologia* against the Platonic knowledge of the soul (and eventually Christianity) and the instrumental knowledge of ancient rhetoric (and later, utilitarianism). In contrast to the philosopher–king and the rhetor, the physiologist "does not wish to substitute the secrets of conscience for the secrets of nature. It is only ever a matter of the world. It is only ever a matter of others. It is only ever a matter of what surrounds us. What is involved is simply knowing them differently."[68] The "relational knowing" excavated in Chapter 5 offers a

[67] For a history of interpretive debates on how to define *phusis* and its relation to *nomos*, see T. A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought* (New York: Meridian Books, 1967), and especially pp. 48–51.

[68] Foucault, *HS*, 235.

constant term of reference in personal relationships; here, Foucault can be seen to hold knowledge to be immanent in these relationships, rather than existing in some separate realm (he cites the Forms, Revelation, Text) outside of the self.[69]

In turning to the worldly knowledge of *phusiologia* rather than the cultural *paideia*, Foucault seeks a different relationship of individuals to knowledge that will affect the criteria to which they appeal when they settle their affairs in common. To say that physiological knowledge is practice-based, that it is rooted in the collective body, is to say something about the nature of the criteria to be applied. Differently from ancient *paideia* or nineteenth-century *Bildung* – in which an external ideal is taken inward – *parrhesia* has an immediacy that would allow individuals to make these conventions as their own. Echoing Freud's appeal to *Nacherziehung*, Foucault instead looks for a poetic knowledge that undoes as much as it educates.

With *phusiologia*, Foucault brings power and knowledge differently to bear on one another. *Phusiologia* qualifies an authoritative speech oriented toward human practices rather than cultural ideal or artful flattery, it allows a very different orientation to shared systems of meaning. *Phusiologia* requires that individuals squarely take on the Pythian function of world-making and the accompanying ethical responsibilities as the condition for their freedom. Foucault writes:

> You can see then that *phusiologia*, as it appears in Epicurus, is not a branch of knowledge (*savoir*). It is the knowledge (*connaissance*) of nature, of *phusis*, insofar as this knowledge can serve as a principle of human conduct and as the criterion for setting us free, and also insofar as it can transform the subject (who was filled with fear and terror before nature and by what he had been taught about the gods and things of the world) into a free subject who finds within himself the possibility and means of his permanent and perfectly tranquil delight.[70]

*Phusiologia* serves a very nearly spiritual function by organizing knowledge in such a way that, in turning to it as a source of meaning, individuals in fact turn to themselves. Individual practices become a more immediate, proximal resource by which to understand a commonly shared world; on the terms of ancient politics, it prompts a search for

[69] For an analysis that nicely situates Foucault against Aristotle, and argues in favor of an "anthropological" consideration of parrhesiastic relations rather than reducing them to the terms of social constructivism, see James Faubion, "Towards an Anthropology of Ethics: Foucault and the Pedagogies of Autopoiesis," *Representations*, Spring 2001, 74: 83–104.

[70] Foucault, *HS*, 241.

alikeness (*homonoia*) in the face of uncertainty as a means toward establishing relations of trust (*pistis*). In response to uncertainty of meaning, parrhesiastic practices at least offer a set of techniques by which individuals can confront this task of world-making, and evaluate the claims of those who claim to be *parrhesiastes* or to speak themselves.

Drawing on Epicurus and the *Vatican Sayings*, Foucault also makes the stronger claim that, as a practice of world-making, *parrhesia* moves individuals closer to what he terms an "ethopoesis" of action.[71] The test and measure of *parrhesia*'s expressive function lies in its ability to provoke individuals to new, principled actions. That is, the techniques associated with parrhesiastic speech and response should prompt individuals to assemble and act within new systems of meaning. To ensure that *parrhesia*'s practices are not self-referential, but engage broader cultural norms, hierarchies, and exclusions, Foucault argues that its ethopoetic function should give way to a new product of knowledge, the "prescriptive fact." By applying the practices of speaking and listening to one's relations to others, individuals should feel compelled to act differently on what they know to be true about these matters of their world.

Ethopoesis requires great care in moving from prescriptive fact to ethical imperative. These prescriptive facts function neither as Kantian imperatives nor as Sartrian moments of authentic choice. Instead, the elaboration of ethopoetic action obliges the same delicacy toward convention mentioned earlier. Even prescriptive facts require some greater contextualization for their entailments to make sense or acquire cultural and ethical salience. Being attuned to them requires that individuals develop the faculty "that will tell me if I ought to use these instruments."[72] In moving from silent audience member to political actor, individuals draw on the same techniques of interpretive discretion in deciding how and when to act. Such discretion is especially relevant for the modern world, in which individuals find themselves faced with a potentially infinite number of personal obligations or public causes to take up, but need a reason to be motivated to act on any one of these. Interpretive discretion is the first feature of ethopoesis.

The second feature of *ethopoesis*, then, is to move from prescriptive fact to expressive action. If the practice of *parrhesia* is based on personal, political, and epistemological relations of knowing, knowledge can be acquired and made operational only insofar as it is expressed and

[71] Foucault, *HS*, 229–246.
[72] Foucault, *HS*, 456.

externalized through one's actions. In the case of the Stoics, this active spectatorship "is a matter of testing the truth of representations and of the opinions that accompany them. It also involves knowing if we will be able to act according to this tested truth of opinions, and if we can be the ethical subject, so to speak, of the truth that we think."[73] If individuals are truly to be physiologists, they must be able not just to demonstrate their independence of critique but also their ability to move from critical understanding to expressive action. By tightly binding interpretation and action, Foucault (rereading the Stoics) makes of these interpretive techniques more that just a formal set of strategies in listening. The techniques used and the interpretive posture adopted cannot be the neutral, disengaged practices of a *techne* – instead, this irreducible ethical component makes of them an art and a morality, and obliges individuals to defend them as such.

At this juncture, the language of "prescriptive facts" echoes strangely with the more familiar Weberian "inconvenient fact."[74] Weber, like Foucault, is concerned to attach disputes over politics and truth to a certain set of dispositions that will enable practitioners to have the proper relationship to, and reflection on, their vocational activities. Yet, for Weber, in contrast to this late Foucault, these dispositions are resolutely personal and individual. One feels "called" to a vocation as a function of one's inner daimon, and it is enough (or all one can do) to assert and act on this personal compulsion. In matters of truth and knowledge, whether one is troubled or blithely ignores those inconvenient facts is a matter of personal conscience and disposition. In matters of politics, the flame of conviction or the sobriety of responsibility is the prerogative of those leaders called to political action; matters of knowledge demand a mediated distance from one's subject matter. The difference between these two species of fact lies in the nature and context of work they engender. Where "inconvenient facts" disconfirm already-held authoritative principles and prompt the work of classroom revision, "prescriptive facts" challenge the very authorization of these claims, and perhaps even the context that orders them. Prescriptive facts nudge individuals toward the elaboration of new norms that can be extended from text to world.

By contrast, the psychoanalytic *Nacherziehung* can only with difficulty organize the expressivity of psychoanalytic enactments so as to make

[73] Foucault, *HS*, 459–60.

[74] Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2004).

them publicly available. As Bersani suggested earlier, this *Nacherziehung* can help individuals and communities recognize the techniques for erasing difference, effacing authorship, and covering over the wounds of illegibility. Although the account of such erasings can help to disillusion community and undo the normative force of convention, it cannot re-invest community in new terms. Its therapeutics, however, schools persons to redirect their metaphoric competence. This is no small claim. Political theory has long agreed that collective figural representations contribute to the process by which persons become public audiences; it has struggled to explain *how* individuals construct and become attached to such civic self-images. The psychoanalytic relationship offers a context that illuminates how such interpretive practices might be learned and moved across divergent contexts. Where Foucault cannot account for why persons might take on such projects, or how they might see trust as something built through shared experiences (rather than as a precondition to any action), psychoanalytic practice can. Foucault's return to the ancients, however, and his invocation of prescriptive facts calls attention to the need for facts to be organized, for them to be construed into a narrative, and for that narrative to engage with a broader system of meaning available to all members of a culture. Indeed, the attention to public audiences and to their interpretive competence is a reiteration of the personal parrhesiastic imperative "to go find people where they are."[75] And so Foucault begins with where he is – in the context of a post–World War Two liberal voluntarist culture. He argues that to redress the asymmetrical relations of power between governing and governed requires a transformation in the interpretive capacities exercised by political audience, such that the interpretive space between knowledge and action is differently governed. Even as Foucault leans on the "art of listening" to slow the tempo of this space, he does so in order to expand the political power and possibilities inherent in interpretation.

## Diogenes and Ethopoetic Action

What prompts a parrhesiastic public audience to feel called upon? What makes it ethically responsive? Even though Foucault's appeal to *phusiologia* does much to associate a shared "body of practical knowledge" to the public authority of the *parrhesiastes*, he struggles to explain how these result in shared, normative criteria of judgment. Here lies the crucial moment

[75] Foucault, *CT,* 278.

in the transition between *parrhesia* as personal and collective practices. And here Foucault turns to Diogenes. The turn to Diogenes might initially seem obvious – Diogenes advocates a "militant life,"[76] he is a figure in revolt, from the margins, a "Socrates gone mad." These qualities might assimilate Diogenes to Foucault's earlier interests in the deviant, and other contemporary thinkers have invoked Diogenes to explore the posture of exile.[77] Although Foucault acknowledges that the "*blason*," or emblem, of cynicism is a dirty, half-clothed heckler, he also dismisses this image is a stereotype. Instead, the images that Foucault associates with Diogenes are other. Foucault cites the "metaphor Epictetus employs, [when] he says that the Cynic is sent ahead as a scout (*kataskopos*), in advance of humanity, to determine what may be favorable or hostile to man in the things of the world."[78] Later, Foucault repeats the common slight that Cynics are "like barking dogs." Ultimately, Diogenes compels because of his public presence: "the immediate, striking, and unrestrained presence of the truth."[79]

By calling attention to the cynic "mode of life" as "really, materially, physically public,"[80] Foucault frames Diogenes as a dramatically public figure. Diogenes challenges others not to greater self-knowledge (as does Socrates) but to greater understanding of their relationship to others and to cultural convention.[81] Diogenes' maxim is not "Know thyself" but "Change the value of the money." In elaborating how this motto could serve as an imperative, Foucault notes that money or *noumisma* should be interpreted as etymologically related to *nomos* or law. So, "'To change the value of the money,' is also to adopt a certain attitude towards that which is convention, that which is rule, that which is law."[82] Insofar as money structures exchanges and relations between individuals, it bears more than a linguistic relation to law, rules, and custom. Money itself *is* a convention and, by the Hellenist period, one closely associated with

[76] *CT*, 284.

[77] For example, Kristen Kennedy turns to cynicism to explore the rhetorical space of exile. "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Space of Embodiment," *Hypatia* 14.2 (Spring 1999): 48–71.

[78] *CT*, 167.

[79] *CT*, 173.

[80] *CT,* 253ff.

[81] However heroic-seeming the Cynical figure may be, he "is of service in a very different way than through leading an exemplary life or giving advice. He is useful because he battles, because he bites, because he attacks" (*CT*, 279). While other parrhesiastic models are similarly combative, "[t]he Cynic battle is an explicit, intentional, and constant aggression directed at humanity in general… whose horizon or objective is to change its moral attitude (its *ethos*) … and thereby, its customs, conventions, and ways of living" (*CT*, 280).

[82] *CT,* 227.

debates in political governance concerning centralization and local autonomy.[83] Diogenes is charged with some examination of those conventions, legal or otherwise, that organize a community. In "holding up a cracked mirror before philosophy," for example, Diogenes challenges the rules of coherence used to organize the discipline and knowledge of philosophy, even as these rules structure his parodic acts.[84]

One might argue that Diogenes, less than being a master of speech-acts, is the master of image acts – not only is he defined through metaphor (alternately as "scout" or "barking dog")[85] but he forces a confrontation with the equivalencies that bridge so-called truth and illusion. Diogenes' authority is one of managing metaphoric equivalences. Diogenes pushes his audience to see the extensions that bind the material power of political figures to their figural representation on the coinage of custom. As a "scout" he brings the news (*l'actualité*) of what lies ahead back to people where they are.[86] While Diogenes cannot serve as a leader, his maxim 'change the value of the money' should cue his audience to the elements of a reflection on value, how value attaches to convention and so gains social "currency," and the circumstances in which that value can be said to be "authorized." Foucault argues that:

> [T]his notion of *parakharaxis*, of changing, of alteration, does not mean 'devalue the money,' but … 'erase the effigy that is found on it' and replace it with an effigy that would allow that coin to circulate with its true value (*sa vraie valeur*). Let that piece of money not lose its true value, and let its value be restored by imposing another effigy on it, a better, more adequate effigy.[87]

[83] T. A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought* (New York: Meridian Books, 1967), 245fn2. See also Peter Brown's *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

[84] Foucault explains Diogenes' engagement with philosophy: "Under the slogan of the unconcealed life, traditional philosophy basically assumed or renewed the requirement of propriety. Applying the principle of non-concealment literally, Cynicism explodes the code of propriety with which this principle remained, implicitly or explicitly, associated. The philosophical life thus dramatized by the Cynics … frees [this principle] from all the conventional principles" (*CT*, 255).

[85] More than mere insult, the "barking dog" epithet comes from Diogenes' juxtaposition of animal-like behavior and propriety by eating in public (*CT*, 261–3).

[86] The timeline of Diogenes' actions are complex. As a scout he pushes forward into an anticipated future, into what "will have been" if conventions continue to be heeded. When he brings back this news to the present, he effectively juxtaposes two temporalities. The confrontation between the two discloses something about the conventions that mediate both moments.

[87] *Le courage de la vérité*, 7 March 1984, CD 7B. The published version reads, "[W]ith regard to this notion of *parakharaxis; parakharattein* (change, alter) does not mean devalue the money. We can sometimes find the important sense of 'defacing (*altérer*)'

By associating the valorization process with the effigies embossed on coins, Foucault once again recasts, rather than jettisons, the nature of authority and its relation to public audiences. Most of Foucault's prior lectures had concentrated on the personal relationships binding figures of authority and their interlocutors. With Diogenes, however, Foucault finds a means by which to link authoritative figures to those practices that sustain public authority. While figures represented on a coin have personal authority, in this particular placement they become very literally "heads of state." That is, their embossed effigy on coinage extends value to this money by associating it with their personal authority, their authority of office, and the society sustained by political and economic relations both. Where the "spectacles about the scaffold" drew their political force from the display of sovereign power, Diogenes is the "anti-king who reveals the illusion of political kingship."[88] He calls attention to relations of power but refuses to participate in their authorization. The task of authoring something new falls to public audience, emboldened by their "armature for life" and their metaphoric competences.

With Diogenes, parrhesiastic speech more clearly moves individuals to establish a relationship (of metaphor, of diagnosis) between their personal and public theaters. Where the psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationships both seek to erase authoritative effigies, only *parrhesia* seeks to replace them with something new. Foucault claims that "practice of the self is now integrated within, mixed up, and intertwined with a whole network of different social relations in which mastership in the strict sense still exists, but in which there are also many other possible forms of relationships. [Such a network] opens onto political activity."[89] Whether the audience will be encouraged, following a cynical performance, to hear and develop a principle of conduct from its claims is a harder question. Again, the usual concern is that cynicism encourages an aloof, withdrawn posture, in which the audience finds shelter in ridicule rather than risking argument; laughter may undermine authority, but it is not authorship. Even as the speech of ridicule lacks the pathos of oratory, the rigor of argument, or the fire of anger, it should push its audience to

a coin so that it loses its value, but here the verb essentially and especially signifies: starting from a certain coin which carries a certain effigy, erase that effigy and replace it with another which will enable this coin to circulate with its true value. That the coin is not misleading about its true value, that its own value is restored to it by stamping with another, better, and more adequate effigy, is what is defined by this important Cynic principle of altering and changing the value of currency." *CT,* 227.

[88] *CT*, 275.

[89] Foucault, *HS*, 206.

seek these three qualities in the speech of leadership. That speech is not that of a revolutionary – Foucault faults revolutionaries for seeking conversion rather than transformation, and dryly notes that the "new" revolutionary posture is to renounce politics itself as irretrievably corrupted. More forcefully, Foucault reads Diogenes as on the cusp of a profound change around practices of self-governance, truth-telling, and representation. Diogenes takes on the challenge of *autarkeia*, or some sense of self-sufficiency, and seeks to live "without mixture and dependence" in the "blaze of naturalness which scandalizes."[90] Such a mission resonates with Foucault's own preoccupations with dependency, self-sufficiency, and risk that led to his perplexing comments on Social Security discussed in Chapter 5.

Offering "image-acts" more than "speech-activity," Diogenes also marks the limit of *parrhesia*'s attention to interpretive regimes; his own authority, rooted in "a blaze of naturalness," erases any mediating work. Namely, Diogenes marks the point at which it becomes possible to embrace the ideals of purity in truth, in knowledge, in *askesis*, and to forget the pedagogical labor that went into fashioning these ideals. He offers fleeting moments of intensity – a kind of "imaginary or mythological of our political thought."[91] These moments' strength lies in their scandal: their ability to denaturalize convention. On the one hand, Diogenes offers a challenge to the Platonic ideal that searches "the essence, form, or structure which is common to political monarchy and sovereignty of self over self."[92] But, to reveal this as "hollow, illusory, and precarious,"[93] Diogenes seems to urge a truthful life that is "pure, unalloyed, unconcealed." The Cynic language of self-sufficiency thus strains against the tangle of relationships cited earlier, the one that denies mastery to any single person or position and instead concentrates on mediating practices.[94] On the one hand, Diogenes comes closest to exemplifying a Nietzschean transvalorization

[90] *CT*, 256, 254.
[91] *CT*, 285.
[92] *CT*, 274.
[93] *CT*, 275.
[94] In one of the lectures' few moments of comparative analysis, Foucault explicitly juxtaposes the Platonic, Stoic, and Cynic models of self- and political governance (*CT*, 270–5). Although Foucault will later argue that the Cynic "militant life" differs from other models in that it is "a militancy addressed to absolutely everyone," the advantages of such openness are countered by its "harsh and dramatic means … to shake them up and convert them, abruptly" (284). Although the abruptness of such conversion is better than the slow adjustments of normalization, the language of conversion reminds that Christian ascetics are none too distant from cynicism.

of values. On the other hand, he marks the limit-point at which parrhesiastic practices become reorganized as Christian technologies.

Through his reading of Diogenes, Foucault charts the transfer of parrhesiastic authorship and authorization to public audience. Foucault suggests that the pre-eminent political actor in moments of political change is not the figure of the revolutionary but that of the spectator. His remarks recall his comments a year earlier on one of his "fetish" essays, Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties*, concerned with a very different historical moment of public-formation: the events surrounding the "historico-mythical" French Revolution.[95] Both then and in his final lectures, Foucault contrasts the figure of the spectator with that of the revolutionary, and the activity of listening with that of legislating; the second essay of *Contest of the Faculties* allows him to extract a series of dispositional claims about this patient process of detachment. In this second essay, Kant considers whether humanity can be said to have progressed, and argues that to make such an assessment one needs to turn to a historically significant event that can be considered as a "sign." Such a sign at once "*rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognostikon*" would demonstrate a complex historical attitude.[96] Foucault reads Kant's claims about the Revolution as an attempt to shift the revolutionary nature of this event onto different grounds. The Revolution is less a sign to be deciphered, perhaps, than a signpost of where society stands in regards to its stated ideals. Foucault notes that rather than concentrating on the obvious agents of the Revolution, Kant instead focuses on the role of spectators. Foucault interprets Kant, to find that:

> [W]hat … is important, has meaning, and constitutes the sign of progress, is that all around the Revolution there is, he says "sympathy of aspiration which borders on enthusiasm." What then is important in the Revolution, is not the Revolution itself, which in any case is a mess, but what goes on in the minds of those not making the Revolution, or at any rate who are not its principal actors.[97]

The approach to this symbolic event, then, is delicate. Foucault clarifies that one should try not to find in this event some greater symbolism or model of the revolutionary political actor, but instead should use the event as a marker of a nascent change in society's ethical values. The event evokes both a hopefulness of aspiration, while at the same time being a

[95] Foucault, *HS*, 206.

[96] Foucault speaks of both Diogenes and the French Revolution in terms of the act to "*remémorer*" – that is, to recall, recollect, or commemorate. *GS,* 16.

[97] *GS,* 18.

point in which conclusive judgment is suspended. It marks the distance between what is hoped for and what simply is. The same *aspiration* that bespeaks of fantasy and desire also connotes the fragile, suspended inhalation that accompanies a very real sense of uncertainty and redirection.[98] Such suspension of the breath provides an entrée into ethical reorientation both literally and metaphorically.[99] This attention to the breath situates the spectator as someone who uses awareness of her physical reaction to an event to begin to redirect awareness inwards. Such a suspension also allows previously involuntary reactions to be brought under at least partially conscious control and perhaps even revised. Through such mental and physical practices of the self, the spectator's relation to historical context becomes gradually engaged.

What remains underspecified in Kant, and what fascinates Foucault, is when and why, despite the uncertainty of this situation, individuals seem to trust their context enough to launch a set of risky claims. In such moments, society's general criteria for what claims are permissible, given the socio-political context, are in enough flux that new possibilities for critique and action emerge. Flux, however, can threaten and destabilize individuals – and so push them toward conservative reaction – as much as it can open up new possibilities. Yet Foucault's reading of Diogenes against Kant helps us to see that the trust invoked here is not a blind faith in an ideal. It is a trust in oneself and in the relationships to others that enable expressive action. Individuals make risky claims because they could not act in any other way and still express their sense of self. The imperceptible changes garnered through something like the scandalous banality of parrhesiastic practice prepares individuals for an extraordinary form of risk-taking and moral claim when such instances arise.

Such critique thus differs qualitatively from political deliberation – it is a critique born of practiced conflict that develops individuals' relations to truth rather than one that aims at the production of consensus. While both forms of speech claim a heritage in the Enlightenment, the first emphasizes liberty in risk, the second stability in consensus; the first examines the conditions for change, the second the conditions for reproduction

[98] In the original French, Foucault uses the term *aspiration,* which can mean alternately a hope or desire, or an inhalation of the breath.

[99] Weber makes a similar claim in "Science as a Vocation" when he writes that only sometimes "does that something pulsate which corresponds to the prophetic pneuma, which in former times like a firebrand swept through our communities, welding them together." *The Political Writings of Max Weber*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 155.

of political institutions. Yet the emergence of such ethical critique and such political claims is far from certain; Kant himself despaired of the Prussians' reaction to the French Revolution, and struggled to balance the Revolution's ideals with its assault on political order.[100]

In the move to spectatorship and the present day, Foucault finds a new means to evaluate claims to truth and to participate in the making of claims with ethical consequences. The "we" that he invokes through Kant is no longer organized around identity or civic community; as Foucault clarifies, "the question will no longer be one of his adherence to a doctrine or a tradition, or of his membership of a human community in general, but a question about him being part of a present."[101] Instead, claims about this "we" are claims about the "texture" of a particular community or context. Membership is no longer a question of *adhésion* (adherence) or the congruence of personal and collective identity. A person *participates* in this present rather than finding himself confronted by something entirely external to himself; the community's authority arises from self-reflexive participation in it rather than through reference to the external authority of doctrine or tradition. Parrhesiastic practices offer practices in ethical articulacy in the absence of epistemological certainty and when confronted by multiple, conflicting claims to authority. In broadly similar terms, these interrogations of the present, like their ancient counterparts, occur against a backdrop of philosophic uncertainty with no clear tie to external authority. Insofar as individuals are both "elements and bearers of the historical process" – that is, participants of this society

[100] In Foucault's original 1978 lecture on "What Is Enlightenment?" an audience member asks whether the political timidity of scholars at the time could be considered an indictment of these claims about critique. Foucault responds with great indignation, "La première audace que l'on doit mettre en oeuvre quand il s'agit du savoir et de la connaissance, c'est de connaître ce que l'on peut connaître… Je crois à cette parenté, quelles que soient les limites, bien sûr, des audaces des *Aufklärer*. Je ne vois pas en quoi, si vous voulez, le fait des timidités des *Aufklärer* changerait quoi que ce soit à cette espèce de mouvement que Kant a fait et dont, je crois, il a été à peu près conscient." Foucault's response is interesting in three respects. First, he characterizes the *Aufklärer* in terms of their audacious speech – the same terms he later lauds in *parrhesia*. Second, it underscores the extent to which he views critique as an attitude distinct from explicit political action. Foucault, at least, believes that his argument does not hang on whether such critique actually leads to successful political endeavors (or at least to political action in this specific historical instance). His later lecture in 1981 reiterates this point. Third, this particular response is surprising given Foucault's own activism and political engagement. Although he devotes a great deal of energies to political action, he does not want such actions and obligations to be legislated. For the entire exchange with his audience, see *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, 84.2 (April–June 1990), 62.

[101] *GS*, 13.

and emblematic of it – they vouch for and authorize the ethical force of their present.

## The Academy as Public Audience?

Foucault's own experience as an intellectual within the French university system elucidates some qualities he hopes ethopoetic engagement might have, and distinguishes it from a more general radicalism. From the beginning, Foucault's relationship to the university could be understood as an experience apart. Having missed May 1968, Foucault instead claims March 1968 as a formative moment.[102] His work in Tunisia at that time, and his presence during the student riots against the government, provided him with a different perspective on the risks attached to critique than that of the mythologized "Nuit des barricades" in the Latin Quarter of Paris. Foucault did not intervene in the Tunisian riots – the personal danger would have been extraordinary and unpredictable, and his position as an attaché for the French embassy could not permit such maneuvers. But his admiration for those students and revolutionaries who acted despite the costs, who could not imagine not acting, struck him. He later contrasted those actions to the "*ronronnement*" (literally, "purring") to be found in his country. Struggling to articulate the difference, Foucault notes that while less intellectually precise, the Marxism of the Tunisians seemed to be more "true." That is, the discourse provided a means to talk about the problems of the "ancien régime" in Tunisia, and to advocate potential changes that corresponded to the needs and truth-telling of Tunisia at the time. Nonetheless, upon his return to France, Foucault actively participates in building the philosophy faculty of the university at Vincennes – a faculty he later leaves for the august Collège de France, citing among other reasons the tendency of students to interrupt his lectures and occasionally lock him out of his classroom.[103] These experiences also point to the difficulties inherent in distinguishing effective from ineffective

[102] Foucault reiterates this claim at a taped dinner party held by Paul Rabinow on November 9, 1983. He explains that the disparity in unjust violence between Tunisia and France, along with the continued insistence in framing all political analyses on doctrinaire Marxist terms, irritated him. This recording is available at IMEC, dossier C5 (1–2).

[103] Foucault joins the University of Vincennes in the aftermath of 1968. While he played a principal role in shaping its philosophy faculty and defended it against a government attempt to discredit its diplomas, the political atmosphere worked against teaching. The students at the time (as well as some faculty) were divided into factions (Maoist, PCF, moderates, Trotskyites) and intent on destroying the university as an institution sustaining capitalism.

argument, and expose Foucault's claims to the weaknesses of arguments that rest primarily on aesthetic efforts to scandalize. These weaknesses are quite real – at first glance, Diogenes does not look so different from the student radicals of Vincennes – but Foucault at least provides a set of criteria that move beyond personal sensibility by which to evaluate those who claim the authority to provoke. The temptation to repeat or to mimic past provocations – to seize their symbolic imagery – is not a problem particular to Foucault's theory. If anything, it might be read as a perverse form of routinization that tries to reproduce the initial shock of the new. At the very least, spectators now have a better set of techniques available with which to evaluate these appeals to their attention.

The unusually lyrical openings to Foucault's books themselves exemplify the education to interpretive authority at the center of my argument. The effect of Foucault's introduction is to challenge habitual modes of academic writing, prepare the reader for a novel rereading of political sovereignty, and yet accomplish these counterintuitive and unexpected effects while compelling the reader to enter into a disruptive and disrupted space. Just as these public punishments require an audience sensitive to their context and convention, so does Foucault need readers with a certain kind of training if they are to engage his critique. As with his earlier work *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault trusts to his readers' abilities to follow him into an unconventional discursive space. Indeed, much was made of these demands in the report on his original doctoral thesis by the examining committee of the generally staid Collège de France.[104] Readers, then, are not always already trained but rewrite as they read. Even as Foucault writes that modern knowledge and power constrict the interpretive lens applied to the world, he trusts his readers' ability to exercise "literary competence." He trusts them to respond to the multiple levels of signification (historical, aesthetic, ethical, political meaning) built into his account of modern techniques of punishment.

These issues concerning the relation between political action, truth-telling, and interpretive education also provide a frame by which to reconsider the ongoing critical reception to Foucault's research. Perhaps the greatest effect Foucault can claim on collective practices of truth-telling is one less directly related to politics: the effect of his writing on scholarly criteria for arguments. Throughout his scholarly career, Foucault's work provoked an enormous methodological stir in the western Academy,

[104] Georges Canguilhem, "On *Histoire de la folie* as an Event," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

especially from historians who condemned the unorthodox use of primary sources and the intrusion of narrative voice in shaping "the facts of the matter."[105] Foucault's work received scrutiny first from the psychoanalytic community, then historians, then classicists concerning the anachronisms and lacunae of his argument. In some ways, this response is not surprising. Foucault's works often require that they be accepted on their own terms before they can sustain any internal critique or engagement, and many academics are reluctant to grant such concessions. Foucault did not help matters by alternately referring to his writing as "historical fiction" and then later claiming more modest ambitions for them – that, for example, *Discipline and Punish* was merely an examination of the French penal system during a brief thirty-year period in the nineteenth century.

Foucault's comment about "historical fiction," however, is a telling one. His works as a whole contest the division of knowledge into distinct faculties of philosophy, history, politics, and so forth; they also contest the extent to which academic conventions for scholarship are anything more than conventions.[106] This position is delicate. Without denying the capacity and need for truths, Foucault insists that many more ways of distinguishing truth from falsity exist than academia usually admits. His books possess a unique capacity: they oblige the reader to ask if the history they present is "true," and if so, in what way. *Discipline and Punish* compels and unsettles not because of its historical scholarship but because it introduces questions, doubts, and skepticism about human beings' abilities to use knowledge to understand themselves and their community. When read in the moral register, the suspicion Foucault provokes touches on those responses and sentiments we are most disposed to consider as "ethical" – those that govern distinctions between cruel and humane treatment, between assistance and exclusion, between assistance

[105] See, for example, "Foucault and the Historians," conversation with Jacques Revel, in *Magazine Littéraire*, 101 (June 1975); see also François Wahl, "Inside or outside philosophy?" in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992); Miguel Morey, "On Michel Foucault's Philosophical Style," in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, ed. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992). For an overview of criticisms launched by Peter Gay, Richard Rorty, Jürgen Habermas, Clifford Geertz, and others, see David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 431ff.

[106] For an overview of the place for fiction in Foucault's historical investigations, see Raymond Bellour's "Towards Fiction" in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, Timothy J. Armstrong, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1992). Foucault's claims about fiction and authorship appear in (among other essays) "La bibliothèque fantastique," "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire,"; "Dire et voir chez Raymond Roussel," in *DE I* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

and abandonment. Further, Foucault disturbs the motivational attachment of these responses to truth-telling practices and so interrogates aspects of these practices that we do not usually and automatically submit to rational scrutiny. Having entertained these sorts of doubts, readers can neither forget them nor dismiss the intellectual and ethical problems they raise – there is no "going back."

Epistemologically, the effects are no different. One of the central elements to academic research is that it speaks truth rather than fiction, and that its truth claims are susceptible to amendation and correction by broadly accepted criteria of evidence. Academics perform professionally what psychoanalysis teaches personally: they regulate distinctions between fact and fiction. By writing in the vein of a Nietzschean "speaking truly," Foucault tests the limits of these criteria. A generous interpretation of Foucault would argue that by writing in the mode of "historical fiction," Foucault hopes to enable readers to see and think and act in ways not previously possible; such is the motivation behind considering contemporary philosophic problems in light of ancient ethical practices. Foucault intends his anachronisms sincerely, and justifies such moves in the Kantian terms of a "sign": "All of these events, it seems to me that we repeat them. We repeat them in our 'present' and I am trying to capture what is the event under whose sign we are born, and what is the event that continues to work us over."[107] Foucault's brand of history, then, seeks to understand how moderns "use history for life" and pull from it a narrative structure by which to make sense of contemporary events.[108] Occasionally in interviews, Foucault admits to the interpretive risks associated with this dramatic rendition of history: "My weakness … is perhaps a sort of intensification, of dramatization of events of which it might be better to speak with less passion. But, nonetheless, it is important all the same to give maximum opportunity to these secret events that twinkle in the past and that continue to mark our present."[109] Such intensification reflects a concern for the external effects and interpretive effects of events, rather than their nature. In genealogical terms, it is a preoccupation with exteriority rather than a descent into the "authentic" or "originary" nature of things.[110]

[107] "La scène de la philosophie" in *DE II* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 574.

[108] This project is one undertaken in the spirit of Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* and one whose concern for truth-telling as a culturally bound enterprise more closely aligns with moral philosopher Bernard Williams than with Richard Rorty.

[109] "La scène de la philosophie" in *DE II*, 574.

Moving beyond the earnest exchange of deliberation, such critique instead seeks critical leverage on those conventions that organize deliberation in the first place. It recognizes that these critiques have effects not by proposing alternatives that spring fully-formed from the heads of new speakers but from the action of changing the rules as they are being engaged. Parrhesiastic practices thus bear some similarities to James Tully's reading of Wittgensteinian language games.[111] Differently from Tully's games, however, these parrhesiastic jousts draw closer to politics through the relational bonds that move these jousts beyond challenges to linguistic convention and toward challenges of political convention. More unusually, the parrhesiastic attention to personal relationship and public audience mitigates the individualism built into liberal practices and founding narratives.

Yet the question remains about the costs of embracing "historical fiction." And here any response will be tricky. Perversely, Foucault writes in the mode of "historical fiction" in order to oblige his readers to attend more stringently to truth-telling; he writes in this mode to draw our attention to the mythologized element of modern society's most reasonable explanations, and also to perform a redistribution of authority for his audience to actualize. Foucault hopes to recalibrate those collective mechanisms by which modern individuals consider something as "truthful," and to whet a dulled taste for truthfulness in a time dominated by spokespeople *(les porte-paroles*) with a tenuous relation to words.[112] These he dismisses as "public dancers" (*des danseuses publiques*) who facilitate the transformation of philosophic thought into slogans.[113]

[110] In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault sets up this play of exteriority versus interiority in order to distinguish genealogical descent from one that seeks a false essentialism. See "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, vol. 2 of *The Essential Works of Foucault*, ed. James Faubion and Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1998).

[111] James Tully, "The Agonic Freedom of Citizens," *Economy and Society* 28 (May 1999): 161–82.

[112] Foucault distinguishes what he takes to be the role of the intellectual, one of "posing questions effectively, truthfully, and posing them with the greatest rigor possible, with the greatest complexity and difficulty such that a solution is not born at once, from the head of some reformist intellectual or from the party platform office of a party." This sort of speech differs from that of "prophets and legislators, all those who speak for and before others." He hopes that this greater fidelity to everyday life (*la vie des gens*) will bring to light "the legitimacy of a commonly elaborated project through concrete questions, difficult cases, movements of revolt, reflections, testimony. It's a question of elaborating bit by bit, of introducing touchy (*susceptible*) modifications, or at least to change the givens of a situation. […] In sum, to be done with spokes-people." See "Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *DE II*, 906. Translation mine.

Nonetheless, Foucault criticizes an Academy rooted in the Enlightenment on precisely that point the modern faculties claim as their origin or *raison d'tre*: that they dispel mythologizing accounts (of history, science, philosophy) that seek to legitimize but are unable to withstand rational scrutiny. This tradition reads in Kant's *Contest of the Faculties* the inevitable overcoming of religious influence on humanistic and political knowledge, and a burgeoning secularism that is to divide the domains of Church and State into institutions, one religious and another political. The faculties, as state-sponsored institutions, ultimately promote rational scrutiny against prejudice and religious mystery. While Foucault may read the *Contest* so as to deepen Kant's conception of "critique," and to make of it a link between private practice and public engagement, some important element of this reading may be lost to his audience and ill-suited to the institution of the university.

These challenges are not entirely left unaddressed by Foucault. While many consider secularism in terms of the rise of reason and the individual, Foucault differently emphasizes the importance of interpretive authority in sanctioning truth-telling and interpretive practices. Universities ought be viewed both with skepticism and optimism because of their ability to stand in for the authority – cultural, institutional, and perhaps spiritual – of the church. University training also should be considered in light of the limits Freud encounters with psychoanalysis – namely, that its methods do not match the unknowable object it pursues, perpetuating the practice of mythologizing, just one of a different sort.

### Interpretive Authority in Politics

Like Freud, Foucault develops a set of critical practices designed to articulate the murmur of claims as yet unframed. Both thinkers argue "that this activity, by which one is useful to others in the exercise of a sovereign life on itself, is a surplus, as it were, an excess, or rather it is nothing more or less than the other side of the relation to self."[114] Life cannot be lived without remainder. In his lectures, Foucault situates his work on *parrhesia* as an effort to shift power from its location in the penumbra of the governing toward the competencies of the governed. The move to situate power and authority as interpretive is not merely another instance

[113] "Structuralisme et poststructuralisme," in *DE II*, 1274–75.

[114] For all that these phrases recall the psychoanalytic language of surplus, remainder, and self-care, Foucault makes this claim. *CT*, 273.

in which Foucault betrays his literary leanings. Instead, it results from the recognition that interpretive authority lies at the heart of concepts central to governance, concepts such as legitimation, authorization, and obligation. If Hobbes is the apogee of absolutist political authority – Hobbes who imagines a sovereign possessive of all interpretive authority as authorized by his subjects – then the public practices of *parrhesia* can be read as an attempt to recapture the subsequent diffusion of this authority through the networks of discourse.

The debates surrounding the nature and legitimacy of psychoanalytic authority underscore that modern authority, broadly speaking, is often trapped between competing contexts and domains. Psychoanalysis, then, offers more than an account of affective investment in political ideologies. It teaches the metaphoric competence necessary to move claims and events authoritatively between contexts. It also schools individuals to the narrative capacities that permit them to re-articulate their experience with these metaphorical equivalences. And most importantly, psychoanalytic practice teaches political theorists that these two movements – the moment of containing a disintegrating self and the subsequent narration of that experience – are not the same. The work of therapeutic action does not coincide with its narrative recounting.

For the vulnerable to reclaim this authority, however, is more than a rectification of structural relations of power. If the governed are to alter, as a public, certain collective practices and conventions, they must be able to give an account of themselves. That is, they must be able to direct the process of subjectivation by which they come to understand the terms on which they are defined. This process is less self-evident than one might think; it implicitly relies on claims of person and population. Even as Hobbes wrote to hand over interpretive control of events to the sovereign, scientists and jurists wrestled with the public standards by which to admit facts and persons into the legal and scientific evidence of personal testimony. The contradiction between rationally patterned order and singular personality is changing. It no longer is an aesthetic contrast between the rigors of science and the ornament of literature that bedeviled Freud, or between the patterns attested by science and the singularities of artistic excellence. It is a new version of the old contradiction between the one and the many: between the excellence of the subject and the plurality of selves, between the unity of public audience and the prolixity of public voices, between the fixity of state borders and the fluidity of moral boundaries. The result is an experience of uncertainty that lacks even the

structural stability of classic formulations of alienation. In such a world, we need practices for managing this uncertainty.

Differently from psychoanalytic practice, *parrhesia* moves beyond subject-formation to the context of public audience and signifying order. If liberal individuals continuously live torn by the dramatic conflict between the conformist pressures of self-integration and a self-reflexivity that tends toward disintegration, the parrhesiastic individual no longer thinks in dichotomous terms of self and political order. Rather than looking to find herself represented in the universalism of convention, she recognizes convention as a technique by which to shift between different audiences of signification who are alive to different registers of cultural meaning. In capturing the complexity of political activity, it is no longer enough to say that political realism is false or that a single technique of unmasking reveals events in the political world. Instead, to participate as a member of multiple audiences or publics requires an education in when to apply what techniques to engage with which conventions. Wielding such interpretive discretion and excellence is to claim something different than that a text is unstable or that its meaning is ambiguous. It is to understand when and how one can be called upon or interpellated, and, more importantly, how to respond: in what guise ought one succumb to aesthetic delight, when to exercise historical skepticism, when to raise an interpretive eyebrow, when to be moved to action.

# 7

# Breaking the Frame, Composing the Event

> The Oedipal problem of truth is resolved by showing how mortals, in spite of their own blindness, will see the light of truth which is spoken by the gods, and which they do not wish to see. The Ionic problem of truth is resolved by showing how human beings, in spite of the silence of Apollo, will discover the truth they are so eager to know.
>
> Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 41

> The very practice so crucial to making … elements of power visible and subjectivity political may be partly at odds with the requisites for developing political conversation among a complex and diverse "we." We may need to learn public speaking and the pleasures of public argument, not to overcome our situatedness, but in order to assume responsibility for our situations and to mobilize a collective discourse that will expand them.
>
> Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, 51

## Figuring Politics

In teasing out the relationships between authorship, authority, and authorization thus far, I have examined the conditions under which authority can be negotiated, expressed, and legitimated, even in conditions of risk and inequality. To think about how *parrhesia* might organize public speech and contribute to the composition of political events, it is tempting simply to ask for an illustrative example – to ask how *parrhesia* as a truth-telling activity apart might be metaphorically represented so as to move first from metaphor to organizing social institutions and then to broader sense-making frameworks. If Foucault and Freud's work on interpretive authority suggests that we attend to the compositional elements of the

authorization process, then presumably this process should be capable of being captured on similar terms. After all, Freud's writing is littered with different models of the psyche – the early hydraulic model, the forays into depth psychology, the later topographical model – and he continually relies on a productive tension between figurative dreams and therapeutic analysis to move this theorizing along. For Foucault's part, each of his earlier works opened with a visual set-piece that quite literally frames the argument to follow: *Order of Things* opens with an analysis of the painting *Las Meninas* and closes with the erasure of human figuration; *Birth of a Clinic* opens with a hysteric bathing, as seen through the medical gaze; *Discipline and Punish* opens with Damiens on the scaffold and closes with the Panopticon. Although the late lectures – and even the more writerly *History of Sexuality* series – lack these same figural metaphors, they would seem to offer many possibilities: the appeal to tragedy and metaphors of theater in Greek drama; the dialogic relationship between Platonic master and disciple, with its overlays of eroticism; the quasi-confessionalism of Seneca – the list could go on. And yet Foucault quickly abandons Greek tragedy (and never considers its metaphoric possibilities);[1] he claims explicitly to move beyond master/disciple relationships (and given the inspiration for the *History of Sexuality* series, the late lectures display an utter disinterest in all tropes of *eros* and *philia*);[2] and his reading of Seneca's self-examination is extremely sympathetic.[3]

[1] Foucault discusses *Ion* at length in *The Government of Self and Others* and a range of Euripidean tragedies in his lectures at Berkeley (including *The Phoenician Women*, *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae*, *Electra*, and *Orestes*). The tragedies receive no discussion in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* or in *Courage of the Truth*. Foucault's comments tend to focus on the status of speakers rather than on any claims about spectatorship, audience, or theater as a civic activity.

[2] Foucault acknowledges the *eros* often associated with Socrates, as well as the "love friendship" associated with Epicureanism. These are not the dominant frames he imposes on the parrhesiastic relationship, however, and he is careful to clarify changes in the place for *eros* over time. In charting the extension of these practices into a pedagogy, Foucault claims "henceforth the practice of the self is no longer just a small matter concerning two persons that takes place in the unique and dialectical love relationship between master and disciple. The practice of the self is now integrated with, mixed up, and intertwined with a whole network of different social relations in which mastership in the strict sense still exists, but in which there are also many other possible forms of relationships. So, first: opening out in relation to pedagogy. Second: there is an opening out in relation to political activity," (*HS*, 206).

[3] Foucault's reading of Seneca has attracted much attention from scholars of Greek and Roman thought, who debate both the merits of Foucault's reading as well as the nature of self-examination that Foucault finds in Seneca. See Brad Inwood, "Seneca and Self Assertion"; Christopher Gill, "Seneca and Selfhood: Integration and Disintegration"; and Shadi Bartsch, "Senecan Metaphor and Stoic Self-Instruction," in *Seneca and the*

Alternately, to work *parrhesia* closer to contemporary politics, it might seem compelling to emphasize its disruptive qualities and provocative speakers. After all, disruption would seem consonant with Foucault's earlier lyrical embrace of transgression and efforts on the part of later scholars such as Butler to develop similar provocations into a politics of performativity. Are we then to turn to the model of Diogenes, who, by Foucault's account, exemplifies a "scandalous life" that might resonate with Nietzsche's call for "outrageous honesty"? Diogenes might be figured in terms of his "image-acts"[4] – the shocking tableaux of provocation designed to arrest passersby, to render visible conventions only putatively natural, and to incite others to live differently. Absent any corpus of texts with which to reach his audience, Diogenes relies on the force of visual impact: an unmediated relationship between truth-teller and audience, and between self and order. On this reading, the irruptive force of such image-acts is to disorder the usual circulation of persons, things, and ideas; straining the usual terms even of a parrhesiastic relationship, its redeployment in the contemporary world might seem an effective counter to the more enervating relations of governmentality. The ethics of subject-formation would map neatly onto a militant politics.[5] And yet the connection of such

*Self*, ed. Shadi Bartsch and David Wray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For other engagements with Foucault's reading, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenist Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); A. A. Long, "Ancient Philosophy's Hardest Question: What to Make of Oneself," *Representations* 74 (2001): 19–36.

[4] For more on image acts, see Liza Blakewell, "Image Acts," *American Anthropologist* 100.1 (March 1998): 22–32.

[5] Such is the argument made by Michael Hardt. Hardt characterizes Foucault's four years of lectures as "a long, circuitous route through ancient Greece [that] arrives finally at a philosophic and political notion of militancy, beyond critique, which appears to be an adequate means to struggle for autonomy and democracy" (20). I remain unpersuaded by Hardt's argument for three reasons. First, Foucault turns to the Cynics only in the last few months of his lectures, and clearly planned to continue the chronology of his lectures into the practices of early Christianity. To see the Cynics as his endpoint beyond critique requires ignoring the previous three years of lectures. Second, the lectures themselves offer no clear theoretical framework that signals the Cynics as Foucault's preferred *askesis*; instead, the lectures are chronologically organized. To argue that Foucault advocates one set of practices over another requires the creation of a framework in which to assess what are clearly plural modes of ancient truth-telling, and then adjudicating between these models. Any argument would need to consider Foucault's stated acknowledgement that the cynicism of Diogenes closely resembles Christian ascetics, and Foucault's earlier critique of Christian ascetics in the *History of Sexuality*. Third, and finally, to say that "[t]he militancy of the Cynics is biopolitical … insofar as it makes life the terrain of political action" is anachronistic (31). Diogenes acts in a time of empire, and much more would need to be done to bring these actions to bear on contemporary democracy and critique. "The Militancy of Theory," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110.1 (Winter 2011): 19–35.

critique to any broader, collective sense-making frameworks has always been frustratingly under-determined. In other contexts, for example, Habermas must reach for a normative theory of communicative action to orient critical engagement; Taylor to the "moral topography" of community validated by the authenticity of self-discovery;[6] and Butler to the "tear in the fabric of our epistemological web"[7] that forces an ethical acknowledgement with the Other. Militancy alone is not enough.

Instead, one might further develop the activity I have been slowly developing through accretion over the course of this book: the use of metaphor to connect authorship to authority to authorization. If in its first instance authority is interpretive, then the weight of political intervention shifts from efforts to *control* the event to efforts to *compose* the event: to intervene so as to affect the framing, meaning, and legitimacy to be invested in the event. Where once the political aim of self-cultivation might have been the exercise of political mastery, we might move toward the exercise of interpretive agency. To return to the crisis of authority with which this book began, psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices offer more than a means to endure a fractured cultural context in which evidence, claim, and authorization no longer neatly align. Nor do they cover over these dislocations with a moralized politics. Instead, their practices operate within the space of dislocation. Rooted in trust and truth-telling, these practices cultivate an interpretive agency so as to scaffold together new frameworks for interpretation within it.

The very proliferation of social metaphors in Freud and Foucault's work testifies to the impossibility of locating or stabilizing modern authority in a single domain. Elaborated in response to the crisis of authority, these metaphors are a provisional means to bridge multiple domains; in so doing, they manifest the construction or effacement of organizing cultural structure. The Panopticon, for example, compels because it bridges penal and social order, and captures the practices of surveillance that quietly organize each. The crisis of authority thus necessitates an ability to move within these metaphors, to understand when they helpfully stabilize (but at what cost), and to dislodge their naturalized claims when these become harmfully entrenched. If the points of instability associated with these metaphors indicate sites of potential interpretive agency, then psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* offer corresponding practices. After

[6] Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[7] Judith Butler, "What is Critique," in *The Judith Butler Reader*, ed. Sarah Salih (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 308.

all, these practices educate individuals to engage agilely those cultural archetypes that bear on their personal history. Could this interpretive agency be deployed in politics?

Theorists of subject-formation can move quickly past transitions from self-cultivation to political practice, or from rhetorical to political strategy. Moving these metaphoric competencies from text to world, however, is a different enterprise than exploring the play of signs in a text. In addition to the challenges of scale and scope, such strategies would need to consider those structures – but especially the influence of political elites and the media – that mediate political engagement. If such practices are to have political bite, they need to speak to three challenges: (1) they need to be adaptable from textual to political engagement; (2) they need to counter the material and rhetorical power of elites; and (3) they need to confront more seriously the structuring effects of the publicity of discourse and the media's role in this publicity.

In the next section I will evaluate the steps that Freud and Foucault have already taken to move a certain set of "metaphoric competences" from textual exegesis to politics. Initially, their efforts evoke the substitution or "abuse of words" powerfully evoked in Nietzsche's *catachresis*. Although authorship could be conceived as an ability to appeal to figurations of some sort – through playful irony, metaphors, or images – on their own these ultimately are insufficient to move from "text to world,"[8] or from reading to authoring. Instead, I want to slow down and consider a few instances in which rhetorical strategies become over-stretched, before outlining ways these strategies might be further refined and adapted for politics. To do so, I will turn to literary theories of "breaking the frame," to consider those interpretive frames that compose political events and lines of action. The examples that I draw from contemporary American politics to elaborate these practices in frame-breaking and composition

[8] I use this phrase as a riff on similar phrasing by Roland Barthes and Jonathan Culler to capture the techniques of *vraisemblance* that govern movement between text and world. Both Barthes and Culler focus primarily on the regimes of naturalization and convention that organize *vraisemblance*, and so leave the categories of "text" and "world" relatively open. Indeed, others such as John Mowitt have argues that the openness of a category such as "text" is central to its anti-disciplinary nature; texts call into question the very regimes of reading that make them legible in the first place, and so simultaneously employ and critique these regimes. As becomes more evident in the following pages, this phrase further signals a shift from thinking about subjectivity on aesthetic terms to thinking it on political terms. See Roland Barthes, *Image–Music–Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Macmillan, 1978); Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2002 [1975]); John Mowitt, *Text: The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

will be largely illustrative. They speak to the specifically American effort to rethink the paradoxical relationship of liberty and authority and its historical specificity around the political relations of liberty and dependency associated with race. My concern here is less to propose a theory of frame-breaking than to initiate a discussion of its techniques, applications, and effects.

## From Metaphor to World

The turn toward composition and event once again marks a point of contact between Foucault's later work on *parrhesia* and his earliest interests in discursive practices dating to the late 1960s.[9] In "Politics and the Study of Discourse," Foucault explained:

> What I am doing is thus … the description of an *archive*. By this word, I do not mean the mass of texts gathered together at a given period, those from some past epoch which have survived erasure. I mean the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define [the following conditions]…[10]

Such an archive collects the texts, images, and myths and interpretive regimes that have been variously used to frame organizing cultural structures.[11] More than sketching a "set of rules," Foucault sketches a field of significance insistent on those "limits and forms" that furnish it: the limits and forms of the *sayable*; the limits and forms of *conservation*; the limits and forms of *memory* as it appears in different discursive formations; the limits and forms of *reactivation*; and the limits and forms of *appropriation* (of discourse). These are the forms that signpost culturally significant and crucial historical conjunctures – those signs that "remember, commemorate, and prognosticate," to recall Foucault's gloss on Kant. Where Foucault's signs are remarkably static, one might turn to psychoanalysis. Historian Richard Armstrong is exactly right

[9] Including, for example, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"; "Politics and the Study of Discourse"; "Theatrum Philosophicum"; and "What is an Author?"

[10] Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse," 59–60.

[11] These features of archives have garnered increasing attention, beginning with Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). The image of archive closes Joan Wallach Scott's *The Fantasy of a Feminist History* (Duke: Duke University Press, 2011). Others drawing on the archive include Elizabeth Wingrove, "Philoctetes at the Bastille," *Cultural Critique* 74 (Winter 2010): 65–80, and Kathy Ferguson "Theorizing Shiny Things: Archival Labor," in *Theory & Event* 11.4 (2008) available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/toc/tae.11.4.html.

to say that "Obsessed as [Foucault] is with the archive of the sayable, Foucault's inadequacy for dealing with Freud is primarily his resistance to the notion that the unconscious archives *that which speaks without being said*."[12] Psychoanalytic enactments, then, would seem to contribute a deeper sense of the conflicted attachments to be associated with this archival project and how they bleed into the future. Later parrhesiastic practices would seem to draw on this archive and parry the "limits and forms" of cultural signs. More than being a descriptive representation of world, this archive offers both the signs to be circulated publicly and also bounds the field of their deployment.

Foucault's insistence on the present moves beyond his earlier, archival pre-occupation with representation as re-presentations. Rather than insisting on the present as something manifest and unmediated, Foucault turns instead to practices of testing, modulating, and evaluating appearances (or what literary theorists call "verisimilitude"). The turn to metaphor has its roots in Nietzsche's diagnosis of modernity as an epoch when "truth was not *permitted* to be a problem,"[13] and the ways in which Freud and Foucault rework their Nietzschean inheritance. If the nineteenth century reached for metaphor to deal with uncertainties in evidence and authority, then, as Nietzsche notes, "only by forgetting [the] primitive world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security, and consistency."[14] Further reflection would only reveal that truth is

> a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred (*übertragen*), and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding (*verbindlich*). Truths are illusions which we have forgotten (*vergessen*) are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost (*verloren*) their image (*ihr Bild*) and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.[15]

Nietzsche thus presents his diagnosis of the perennial instability of truth and the crisis of authority it occasions. For those individuals who choose to confront its uncertainties, the use of metaphor becomes "a suggestive transference, a stammering translation into a completely

[12] Richard Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Ancient World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 131.

[13] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 153.

[14] Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in the Extramoral Sense," in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s,* ed. Daniel Breazeale (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press 1979), 86.

[15] Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies," 84.

foreign tongue – for which there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force."[16] These passages resonate strikingly with Freud and Foucault – both in its language of 'intensification,' 'transference,' and 'intermediate spheres,' and in the common referents to the figurative authority of effigies and coinage. Other similarities are conveyed linguistically. Nietzsche's reliance on certain prefixes (usually, *über* and *nach*, or 'over-' and 'after-') captures a sense of movement and transfer (*übertragen*), one akin to the movement of past into the present through psychoanalytic transference (*Übertragung*), for example.[17] Permitting truth to become a problem thus opens up questions of the translation and adaptation of concepts and experiences across different domains.

But these similarities to Nietzschean metaphors also highlight what is strikingly *different* – namely, that in psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices, this "intermediate sphere" with its "mediating force" and "stammering translation" is material and manifest. Foucault says as much when he calls attention to Freud's development of such spatiality and notes that Freud has "profoundly modified the space of distribution in which signs can be signs."[18] Signs do not simply acquire depth; they meld together instabilities of experience as they are reworked by historically specific interactions. Psychoanalytic enactments breathe life and bodily experience into the claim that expression is more than what is said; the expressive subjectivity of *parrhesia* is rooted in an activity that forever tries to overcome discrepancies between self and deed; both spaces specifically seek out dynamic social relationships. More than linguistic play, the relational resistances and "stammering translations" that constitute psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* have affective, social, and ethical bite. Through their materialization of the "limits and forms" of discourse, psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices extend such exegetical skills into social space. Psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* make good on their stated

[16] Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies," 86.

[17] J. Hillis Miller calls attention to Nietzsche's play of prefixes in "Dismembering and Disremembering in Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," *Boundary* 2, 9/10 (Spring-Autumn 1981 double issue): 41–54.

[18] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology,* vol. 2, *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ed. James Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 272. Foucault then turns to Freud as someone who extends Nietzsche's claims. Foucault notes that beyond the metaphorical space of the mind's topology "it would be necessary to recall the spatiality, very material after all," that is organized through the rules of psychoanalytic treatment and the analytic relationship "that is clearly constitutive for psychoanalysis" (273, 275).

intention of redirecting persons' attention to the social (Freud) and the political (Foucault) fields of engagement. The psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic models thus offer and advocate more than the "abuse of words" associated with rhetorical *catachresis*.

These models further recognize that the metaphoric play of truth-claims is ongoing and opens up different possibilities at different historical conjunctures. After all, social metaphors have a history that permits them to move from being culturally scandalous to all-too-apt. The skeleton of a new organizing structure of meaning – be it psychic or social – emerges from the hollowing and detritus of what came before. Holding onto the lived-experience of crisis, the psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic models benefit by not being over-written by that crisis. Freud's case histories and Foucault's historical fictions reside in a space whose authority is irreducible to scientific or literary explanation and in which history, uneasily, bridges this divide.[19]

And so these models trail behind them a history that traces how certain "stammering translations" moved into the cultural world and became legible.[20] This legibility was not immediately self-evident. Psychoanalysis, for example, was long stymied by the growing recognition that it could not integrate its theoretical goals into empirical inquiry – that it is not possible to "test" for the existence or effect of a primal trauma, for example. Its theoretical ability to challenge those categories and

[19] Drawing on Foucault's claims, Jacques Rancière elaborates this distinction between scientific and literary genres of justification, and the role of history in mediating between them, in *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, trans. Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). The key passages that outline this schema are in "A Secular Battle" (1–10); the book ends by reflecting on the poetics of history and how they might be more cannily deployed. Hayden White's introductory gloss is quite helpful in situating this unusual perspective with the debates of the French *Annales* school from the post-war period onward. Historians Jacques Léonard and Gérard Noiriel speak directly to Foucault's role in these debates. Jacques Léonard, "L'historien et le philosophe," in *L'Impossible prison*, ed. Michelle Perrot (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980); Gérard Noiriel, "Foucault and History: the Lessons of a Disillusion," *Journal of Modern History* 66 (September 1994): 547–568. Jeffrey Weeks uses a similar framework to speak to the intersection of historical reception and the political effect of Foucault's work. "Remembering Foucault," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 14, no. 1/2, *Special Issue: Studying the History of Sexuality: Theory, Methods, Praxis* (Jan.–April 2005): 186–201, 194.

[20] Historian Sarah Winter analyzes the "cultural career" of psychoanalysis and investigates the processes that legitimated psychoanalysis both as professional expertise and cultural resource. Sarah Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). Her account is historically thorough and adopts a quasi-social scientific frame for her history; it has rather less on legitimating processes than one might wish.

representations that organize moral, political, and cultural life clashed with those therapeutic goals that appeared to be motivated by some kind of secular humanism. In the face of this conflict, analysis, like Nietzsche's interpretation, became (merely) interminable.[21] Interpretation seemed endless and authority elusive.

By 1954, however, Foucault could see what was opaque to Freud only twenty years earlier: that psychoanalysis was unable to grasp its own contingency and to historicize itself, and thus became trapped between its critical and therapeutic impulses.[22] Some sixty years after Foucault's caustic diagnosis, these instabilities remain, but the responses possible have changed. In the case of psychoanalysis, the relational component of its practice now carries different symbolic significance in clinical work and opens a passage to escape the interminability of interpretation. By virtue of moving psychoanalytic claims into social space, it becomes possible to live alongside of them, to endure their provocations, such that these signs convey something new.[23] For example, moderns can now countenance the psychoanalytic challenge to conventional order, since they are well used to the instabilities of authority and authoritative context. However much moderns disagree, they can engage Foucault's claim that "medical practice [was] for a long time no more than a complement to the old rites of Order, Authority, and Punishment."[24] Rather than searching for Ur-representations – of culture, society, the psyche – the activities of play, fantasy, and reality-testing (among others) make it possible to parry these representations and the grounds they authorize. Public audience can respond to Freud's innovations, and appreciate (or not) "the experience

[21] Literary theorist Peter Brooks reads Freud in much the same way. If the resistances of analysis or Freud's case histories are merely delays before the satisfaction of closure, then they must "impose an end which yet suggests a return, a new beginning: a rereading. Any narrative, that is, wants at its end to refer us back to its middle, to the web of the text: to recapture us in its doomed energies" (*Reading*, 109). Without denying the values of rereading, I would argue that Brooks misses the broader context – namely, that psychoanalysis is caught between therapeutic, literary, and scientific domains. By calling attention to this context and its crisis of authority, the indeterminacy of psychoanalytic practice can achieve greater effects beyond celebrating the pleasures of this indeterminacy.

[22] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 288.

[23] Richard Rorty makes a similar point when he argues that psychoanalysis helpfully provides a moral vocabulary through which to work through dilemmas ill-suited to existing vernaculars. Psychoanalysis, then, might well be discarded once moderns have found other ways to articulate and grapple with experiences of dislocation, alienation, and moralized aggression. "Freud, Morality, and Hermeneutics," *New Literary History* 12.1 (Autumn 1980): 177–85.

[24] Foucault, *MC*, 272.

of the very possibility [for] existence of these representations."[25] Telling this history makes it possible to recognize that the incompatibilities across these representations are sites of potential interpretive agency.

Foucault's deployment of rhetorical strategies in politics has likewise changed over time, and in a way that more clearly seizes and reworks any potential for interpretive agency in politics. Foucault's early writings – such as *Theatrum Philosophicum* – turn to irony, the theater of perversity, and LSD as experiences that push thought beyond categorical distinctions of truth and falsity.[26] Where these intensely poetic efforts falter – where they fail to become *etho*-poetic – is in their intransigent particularity and disavowal of existing networks of political relations. Adherents are urged to identify the limits of the permissible, but these efforts offer little insight into how these exploits might be elaborated into a more enduring self-formation. These activities contrast sharply with the interpretive work of *parrhesia*, a work whose understanding is less a subjective act than the participation in an event of tradition, such that "in producing the event of the utterance the subject modifies, or affirms, or anyway determines and clarifies his mode of being insofar as he speaks," and so maintains a tension between productive utterance and "retroactive effect."[27] Moving away from a self-centered interpretation driven by the "great narcissistic wounds in western culture,"[28] *parrhesia*'s relational subjects seek something beyond themselves. Theirs is a "participation in an event of tradition" – in actions themselves in the process of unfolding, actions whose direction and authority is both presumed and yet still to be authorized. In *parrhesia* as in psychoanalysis, this intermediate space, along with the engagement of cultural archetype, makes it possible to balance world-making projects with that field of tensions that characterize public discourse.[29]

[25] John Toews, "Foucault and the Freudian Subject: Archaeology, Genealogy, and the Historicization of Psychoanalysis," *Foucault and the Writing of History*, ed. Jan Goldstein (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 123.

[26] "Theatrum Philosophicum," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[27] *GS*, 67–8.

[28] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, ed. James Faubion and Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1998), 272.

[29] In this sense, Freud and Foucault could be said to concretize efforts to take the universal as a site for contestation. To the extent that psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices engage universal ideals and archetypes (Freud) or conceptions of the human (Foucault), their practices also appeal to, manhandle, and rewrite these ideals. Butler has written about this contestatory process in *Undoing Gender* and sought to capture its heterogeneous elements. For Butler, sometimes this contestation entails revealing how the universal is "not-yet realized" in order to illuminate exclusions that are politically operative

How far, though, can the simple experience of the contingent nature of cultural representations be leveraged? More specifically, how might it be moved yet further from reading or personal history and toward political action? These questions are perennial ones in political theory. Linda Zerilli's work on collective figuration, already discussed in Chapter 3, stands again as a kind of "tutor text." Engaging these questions, Zerilli finds such figurative potential in the work of Monique Wittig, and moves to read this potential into practices in political freedom. She hails the ability of Wittig's literary works "to lead before the eyes with images and metaphors" (again evoking *catachresis*).[30] Yet the power of this figural leadership falters when pressed into service of laudable ends – new practices and communities – too quickly. Recovering crucial ambiguities in Wittig's work – the tensions that bind Wittig's polemical essay "The Straight Mind" to her novel *Les guérillères* – Lisa Disch uncovers a more fundamental challenge to the adaptation of figuration for politics – namely, that rhetorical practices often trade in ambiguities and experiment, and so offer "call[s] to effect a common divestment" as much as "a summons to unite."[31] For Zerilli's effort to recover rhetorical practices that hover closer to the field of politics, this discovery of their unpredictable effects is not fatal. But Disch's subtle reading – one that notes the variant literary genres engaged by Wittig, and their move between written and oral address each with different demands on audience response – complicates the question of *how* to redirect Wittig's metaphors and with what effect on public audience. Disch concludes that Wittig "disorients the subject of humanism by depriving it of its axis in sexual difference."[32] Restrained to written texts, this disorientation would provoke a simple response: recursive rereading. One might appeal to the circulation of meaning within and between texts, a circulation that can be re-entered at different points through multiple rereadings.[33] Zerilli pursues exactly that strategy with masterful rereadings of key feminist texts. These readings, however, lose

even though critique has moved on (191). Sometimes the universal remains a hollow shell that is only a point of reference for political difference. Sometimes the universal is a historical marker that serves as a touchstone when theory and practice fall out of step, or to use fantasy to "bring the elsewhere home" (217). Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[30] Linda Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 70.

[31] Lisa Disch, "'French Theory' Goes to France," in *Judith Butler's Precarious Politics*, ed. Terrell Carver and Samuel A. Chambers (London: Routledge, 2008), 57.

[32] Disch, "'French Theory,'" 59.

[33] Samuel Chambers appeals to such rereadings in *Untimely Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

sight of divergences in audience response. The critical confusion before *Les guérillères* and the polemical heat generated by the public address of "The Straight Mind" become compressed into a single position. An important gap is elided: the gap between the experience of reading and the activity of interpretive critique (a critique that inevitably stabilizes these readings). And that gap only widens when one seeks to move interpretive critique into politics.

We might return now to Foucault's earlier metaphor of the archive to ask if the archive alone provides an adequate resource to move rhetorical practices into politics. On the one hand, the archive becomes that collection of énoncés, texts, events that are taken to convey a sort of *koinos logos* – a common sense or understanding that might be said to characterize a political community (rather than a people, a religion, a nation, a state).[34] These serve the conditions of political possibility – more than a dialectic legacy to be recovered, confronted, or overcome, they serve as the unstated "rules of the game" that organize political interest. The archive further captures the sense of composition from fragmentary utterances, the unification of these and other practices into discourse, the uneasy disjunctures between political principle and political discourse, between ideal political subjects and their practicable selves. On the other hand, the archive *cannot* capture the dynamics that bind individual psychology, politics, and discourse. Other essays, such as *What Is an Author?* – differently emphasize the circulation of those "limits and forms" of archival effects. With these essays, Foucault insists on the juridical and institutional system "that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses."[35] He also insists on the historical specificity of rhetorical practice and political effect, and that these practices ought not be reducible to individuals and their motivations. Indeed, from "Politics and the Study of Discourse" onward, Foucault constantly dodges those questions of intentionality, about the subjective consciousness, about the epistemological position that would make his version of critique operative. He tries a number of different figural responses to bridge subject-formation and political agency: the artist, the critic, the specific intellectual, each seeking to avoid too perfect an overlay of psychology, politics, discourse. Each figure seeks to broach lived experience with the field of politics, two sites in ambiguous relation to each other, and each occupies an ambiguous perspective seemingly "from the outside."

[34] Foucault uses the phrase *koinos logos* in his readings of the Stoics.
[35] Foucault, "What is an Author?" 216.

Foucault's late lectures return to these figures, refuse to universalize their postures, and instead adopt the view "from below." Even as he acknowledges that certain figures have been nodal points of self- and political governance at different historical moments – "the prophet, the seer, the philosopher, the scientist"[36] – the emphasis shifts to the staging of a "dramatics of discourse" by which truth-telling is an activity to be framed rather than a status to be achieved. These ethical practices would seem to meet Foucault's earlier methodological preoccupations so as to seek political effect. With the "dramatics of discourse" offered by *parrhesia*, Foucault asks whether it might be possible to broach these methodological issues of authorship with politics: "I would like to see whether, from this double, philosophical and methodological point of view, we might not understand the … political dramatics of true discourse, and what different forms, what different structure of the dramatics of political discourse might there be."[37] If Foucault's earlier work gestures to a variety of figures, his final lectures suggest an effort to theorize the "dramatics of discourse" in which they are embedded. One might push further and demand more than description. Already, Freud and Foucault's models for self-cultivation enable persons to rework their relation to norm and convention, and so enter differently into politics. Metaphoric competences might gain further *political* value when used to narrate that experience of vulnerability back into the field of politics. This is because we contemporaries need an account of symbolic investment that empowers individuals to rewrite the cultural codes inscribed on them – to "break the frame" of one sense-making framework and compose another.

## Breaking the Frame: The Turn to Literary Theory

Foucault never elaborates his evocative claims about the "dramatics of discourse" into its promised engagement with political practice. Stepping back from Foucault, then, I propose that reading parrhesiastic practices against psychoanalysis provides an interpretive opportunity that bleeds into politics – namely, such a reading offers the opportunity to "break the frame" so as to more readily "compose the event." What do I mean by these phrases? For those writing within literary theories of narrative – I am thinking here of Gérard Genette (a contemporary of Foucault's) and later scholars such as Franco Moretti, Jonathan Culler, Peter Rabinowitz,

[36] *GS*, 69.
[37] *GS*, 69.

and James Phelan[38] – there is a broad recognition that persons or characters are formed in relation to one another. That is, the formal structure of narrative works in such a way that characters are contoured and acquire substance, through their positioning in regards to each other. These relations form "frames." Literary theorists talk about frame-breaking (or *metalepsis*) when they describe how characters break the different levels or interpretive schemas of a narrative and so re-align their relations to other characters. Literary theorists further recognize that within a narrative, these sense-making frameworks do not always perfectly overlap; the Creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, for example, can plausibly be read as a monster, as a pitiful orphan, or as the product of science, but he can't be resolved into any one of these frameworks.[39] Or one might heed those moments when characters move between different levels of narrative; in Milan Kundera's *Immortality*, for example, characters often turn around and address the novel's author. The premise here is one of circulation – of movement within the confines of the text and its different narrative levels. Somewhat similarly, psychoanalysts use "frame-breaking" to refer to those moments when patients try to alter the terms of the relationship: when they arrive late or leave early, seek to reschedule an appointment time, forget to pay, and so forth.[40] These are perceived

[38] The texts one might turn to include Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980); Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World* (London: Verso, 2000) and *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (London: Verso, 2007); Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics,* 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2002 [1975]); Peter Rabinowitz *Before Reading*, 2nd edition (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1998 [1987]); James Phelan, *Reading Plots, Reading Plots* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1989). A second generation, more mindful of the effects of political context and ideologies on literary narrative, includes Alex Woloch, *The One and the Many* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Debra Malina, *Breaking the Frame: Metalepsis and the Construction of the Subject* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2002). Others could be included; the volume *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. David Lodge and Nigel Wood (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008) provides a helpful introduction to key texts.

[39] Criscillia Benford, "'Listen to My Tale': Multilevel Structure, Narrative Sense Making, and the Inassimilable in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," *Narrative* 18.3 (October 2010): 324–346.

[40] The term "frame" is first used by Marion Milner in 1952 to set apart the psychoanalytic relationship from other social relationships. The "frame" also distinguishes processual elements of psychoanalysis from those aspects that are unalterable. Marion Milner, "Aspects of Symbolism and Comprehension of the Not-Self," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 33: 181–95. Although most instances of frame-breaking are inadvertent, psychoanalysts have debated the relative merits of deliberate frame-breaking (usually by divulging some piece of personal information). See Jay Greenberg, "The Analyst's Participation: A New Look," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 49: 359–81. Relational analyst Stephen Mitchell suggests that frame-breaking results from

as efforts to rewrite the few norms organizing the very unconventional space of analytic exchange. Dora, then, breaks the analytic frame, first by rewriting the terms on which her analysis proceeds, and, second, by complicating any narrative authority Freud might claim in his case history. The friction that results from either kind of frame-breaking permits authors to explore competing conventions and the terms of their conflict without necessarily forcing a resolution. Beyond literature and psychoanalysis, the practice of frame-breaking would also engage those relations between persons that contour and compose. Frame-breaking seeks to broach the politics of knowledge with the poetics of narrative.

Frame-breaking is only occasionally invoked by political theorists. However, it helpfully speaks to one element of the modern crisis of authority: that claims cannot move across different domains – across science, literature, history, or law, for example – without friction. Some of these instances are well-familiar – the moving of medical diagnostic criteria into legal settings, for example. Others may be less well-known. In *Excitable Speech*, Judith Butler invokes frame-breaking to capture the displacement of authority through citation or the iterability of authoritative practices. Butler defines iterability as "*the operation of that metalepsis by which the subject who 'cites' the performative is temporarily produced as the belated and fictive origin of the performative itself*."[41] In this example, frame-breaking occurs when a person says something – 'It's a girl!' – and thereby authors a claim, while both relying on and subordinating the prior authorization of (in this instance) convention. In both examples, frame-breaking is used to cover over a disjuncture between different domains of authority – to avoid specifying the grounds that authorize speech. As something other than critical resistance or interpretive contest, frame-breaking seems to trace the effacement of authorship and authority.

Frame-breaking would seem an ideal counter, then, to implicit or explicit efforts to conceal authority and authorization. After all, with the disappearance of authority comes the dissipation of efforts to contest its authorization. Challenging either the force of the utterance or its displaced origin encounters a problem: who to hold accountable. Butler asks, "Would this not be something like the effort to prosecute a history that, by its very temporality, cannot be called to trial? […] The juridicalization

the impasse posed by false, binary choices; he argues that it can lead to clinical outbursts and theoretical breakthroughs. Stephen Mitchell, *Influence and Autonomy in Psychoanalysis*, (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1997).

[41] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech* (London: Routledge, 1997), 49. Emphasis in the original.

of history, then, is achieved precisely through the search for subjects to prosecute who might be held accountable and, hence, temporarily resolve the problem of a fundamentally unprosecutable history."[42] In the face of such authorial instabilities and displacements, it becomes impossible to link authorship, authorization, and authority. The effect is to confuse the authority of the speaker with the authorization conferred by past claims and to leave any critical audience stammering its complaint.

Is this effect inherent to frame-breaking itself? After all, Butler works through these connections of authority and authorization within a legal context, a context that may skew her understanding of frame-breaking, citationality, and authorship. Legal insistence on the impersonal authority of precedent seems to imbue the deferment of authority with similar qualities. For Butler, the force of authorship resides in the tradition that houses it: "If a performative provisionally succeeds… then it is not because an intention successfully governs the action of speech, but only because that action echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices*."[43] Frame-breaking as citation is a constant in a legal tradition that relies on precedent to assert authority over new jurisdictions and shifting cultural contexts. But once again we find ourselves before the notion of modernity as a trial that needs to resolve a crisis of evidence in the absence of final authority.[44] The result is a "juridicalization of history" that only deepens the divide between doer and deed, pain and injury that makes contest so difficult to direct.

What if the interpretive agency associated with frame-breaking were to be more directly seized and redirected? Here I would like to push back against Butler's turn to a legal context, and to claim that these examples are not paradigmatic. Rather, legal citationality serves as a limit example of the confrontation between truth and power. Butler's emphasis here on repetition that follows the moment of frame-breaking calls attention to the importance of citationality in making present a new authoritative claim. Caught in the confines of legal context, the democratic potential of frame-breaking is lost. In addition, the logic of contest becomes framed by the law's pretense that matters of trust and truth-telling are stable and that the only interpretive activity available is to patrol or challenge these borders. The moral force of *trauma*, *witness*, and *testimony* resides in

[42] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 204.
[43] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 205. Emphasis in the original.
[44] The language of *witness*, *testimony*, and *trial* was earlier discussed in Chapters 3 and 6.

its efforts to seize control of the terms on which events happen and are understood. *Trauma*, *witness*, and *testimony*, become rhetorical strategies designed to force a stark re-alignment of relations of power. Insofar as these strategies invert claims to authority and assert new standards of evidence, they are ill-suited to holding onto the indeterminacies of experience. Legal citationality and its contest require persons to forget that distinctions of truth and falsity are inherently unstable. Too insistent a focus on the determinant power of law would seem to elide the work of interpretation that mediates between different authoritative domains. Without entirely abandoning legal sites of contest, one might seek additional ways of moving rhetorical strategies into politics.

Just as Foucault sought to bracket the power of juridical and political interpretations so as to amplify the dramatics of discourse, contemporary politics might do the same in its play with frame-breaking and composition. Other instances of frame-breaking could be seized in order to call attention to the insufficiency of authority, to animate the public audience involved, and to highlight the reading practices that guide its tacit authorization of convention. Rather than forgetting the evidence that challenges the repose of truth, the audience that is always "off to the side" could then rewrite as it reads. Instances of frame-breaking thus become followed by efforts at composition – efforts to test, modulate, and evaluate new readings. When Dora, for example, breaks the frame of analysis by giving Freud her two weeks notice, she effectively directs the tempo of work and what Freud can achieve. Although Freud cannot see the contrast she creates between a world organized around patriarchal norms and her fantasized reality in which they are absent, his readers can. And contrary to Freud's efforts, that audience "off to the side" reads and rewrites his case history on quite different terms than his. Recursive rereadings of the Dora history, when at their best, seek less to vindicate or eviscerate Freud's personal authority than to understand what conditions left Dora's appeals alternately to vulnerability and agency incompatible and illegible. The potential benefit would be to motivate efforts, *collective* efforts, to return to and rework what deferments of authority so often seek to evade: the very basic relation between vulnerability and agency. For Butler's part, although she acknowledges the "possibility of resignification"[45] around these moments of frame-breaking, she gives no indication of where to look for such potential or how to cultivate it.[46] If

[45] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 161.
[46] Butler revisits some of these concerns in *Undoing Gender*.

confrontations around the law result primarily in deferred and derivative authority, those seeking a space for greater interpretive agency for the governed might need to look elsewhere.

To broaden the political effects of frame-breaking, one might seek out new "intermediate spaces" in which to leverage incompatibilities across those domains that would regulate political life. Rather than rereading, these emergent encounters create what Nancy Chodorow calls "a *recursive relativity*: analyst and analysand participate in a relationship they have mutually created, and hence neither can be exclusively outside it looking in."[47] Such recursive relativity reflects (and reminds) of the impossibility of an 'outside.' Instead of looking expectantly toward figures of prophets, scientists, or intellectuals as the embodiments of an ideal of autonomy, control, or mastery, persons "read" the relationships that compose their personal and public contexts. Accustomed to working through signifying repetitions in the analytic encounter, it becomes easier to find their relations to others composed of similar repetitions. This recursive relativity is a first step toward making any rereading of cultural form or symbolic relationship more than exegetical exercise. It locates overarching structures in the specific relations of a shared ontological present.

As part of a dramatics of discourse, frame-breaking would also throw into relief those mediating structures that hold power, truth-telling, and self-formation in alignment. For its part, psychoanalysis prompts us to break with the frames – the fantasies – that hold this dramatics in place. For example, rather than repeating the question, hysterically posed, of 'what is to be done?' the response might be "to break with the fantasy that prompts it."[48] Jonathan Lear's intuition is that the scope and potential for action rests on organizing fantasies not so easily seen or undone. Moving between theoretical and therapeutic claim, Lear argues that in foregoing the hasty link of psyche and culture, "[w]e are then open to the possibility that psychoanalysis is not part of any developmental unfolding, but itself represents a break that opens up new possibilities."[49] For the patient, such psychic breaks differ from efforts to repair inconsistencies in psychic structure and one's outlook on the world. Within the

[47] Nancy Chodorow, "From Behind the Couch: Uncertainty and Indeterminacy in Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice," *Common Knowledge* 9.3: 463–487. Emphasis added.

[48] Jonathan Lear, *Happiness, Death and the Remainder of Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 153. At this point in his argument, Lear is asking what is gained or lost by backing away from driver theory and its emphasis on the aggression of the death drive in particular.

[49] Lear, *Happiness*, 154.

context of psychoanalytic theory, clinicians can loosen the grip of starting assumptions (e.g., the intractability of drives) to mobilize new resources (the power of formative relationships on self and agency) and so to alter the scope for change. Psychoanalytic practice makes these clinical and critical breaks habitable. In the context of politics, practices in frame-breaking might accomplish what Foucault and Butler describe as the moment when "that field meets its breaking point, the moments of its discontinuities, and the sites where it fails to constitute the intelligibility it promises."[50] Frame-breaking evokes the "perpetual mobility, essential fragility or rather the complex interplay between what replicates the same process and what transforms it."[51] Especially as part of a dramatics organized "from below," rather than legislated "from above," frame-breaking could initiate an ongoing conversation with the political unknown – with the preferences and identities not-yet captured by elites and not-yet articulated by citizens.

If frame-breaking is to incite new alignments among persons and to open new political possibilities, then this reorientation needs to be a motivated and lived experience. While Foucault's dramatics seeks to place self-cultivation and metaphor more clearly within the political field, its weakness lies in reading practices that are too narrow. Foucault's parrhesiastic practices, much like his earlier works, tend to be weakest on questions of affective motivation, enactment, and the uneven unsteadiness of collective divestment. These practices speculate a strategic interaction that is direct, pointed, and relatively untroubled by the remainders of fantasies half-thought and pasts half-realized. Psychoanalytic practices, precisely because of the instability of their authorship, attend differently to the conflicted investments and repugnances that make its own experience intolerable. Its attention to metaphoric competence in particular tends to the work only hinted at by Foucault: the working-through of the doubts, unease, prejudice, and suspicions that constantly threaten to scuttle this project. In politics, much as in psychoanalysis, these are the discomforts that cause people to bolt from the activity of critique and composition and seek to reassert the prerogatives of control. Read alongside psychoanalytic practice, then, the dramatics of discourse offers a complex response to the indeterminacy that accompanies any figuration and coordination of political change. After all, change is as much an undoing as it is a beginning anew; the composition of an event requires

[50] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 216. Butler is paraphrasing Foucault here.
[51] Foucault cited in Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 216.

divestment as much as investment; authority is as much a letting-go (of previous claims or structures of power) as it is an authorship and authorization of something new. By considering both sets of these practices as a "recursive relativity," they offer less a retreat inward to re-examine personal feelings, histories, and motivations than a return to the relations and political fields that silently allow certain readings to persist.

## Composing the Event: Elites and Public Audiences

We are now better situated to ask, "What would it mean to compose, rather than control, the event?" Frame-breaking as used in literature implies an author–sovereign able to compose a narrative even as she cannot control the effects on reading audiences. In politics, frame-breaking would seem to direct attention away from efforts to control events and outcomes, and toward their instabilities – instabilities that might be sites for interpretive agency. If the crisis of authority is marked by competing claims to legitimacy with references to competing bodies of evidence, then efforts to assert control will always stand in need of justification – that is, claims to authority will always involve strategies of communication to bind speakers and audience. While it might be tempting to fold this communication into a deliberative model, Carl Friedrich (one of the contributors to the first *Nomos* volume on authority) resists such a move. Instead, he describes authority as "exhibit[ing] a very particular kind of relationship to reason and reasoning."[52] When hollowed of its special qualities, authority becomes a "phantom which recurs in human society when men issue communications as authoritative which are believed to allow for reasoned elaboration when actually they do not."[53] Friedrich hints at a play in the composition of authoritative claim and the reception that binds author and audience. Such compositions both reveal and conceal; they reveal "a very particular kind of relationship to reason and reasoning" even as their persuasion conceals the conventions that make them believable. It matters less *where* authority is located – in which person, institution, or group – and more *how* it is expressed; there can be no fixed position beyond moral reproach or political contest. Authorship and authority mark *how*, exactly, individuals bind themselves to norm and public audiences. To further move this language of metaphoric competence, frame-breaking, and composition into a political context would

[52] Friedrich, "Authority, Reason and Discretion," 35.
[53] Friedrich, "Authority, Reason and Discretion," 27.

necessitate tackling various of its structural features: the circulation of discourse, the resources that back such claims, and any mechanisms for internalization of collective claim or image.

For persons to identify and respond to moments of frame-breaking presumes that individuals draw on multiple perspectives in their daily lives. For example, they might be like the Rat-Man, and "composed by two creeds." Or they might be like the figures of Pierre Rivière and Herculine Barbin, figures who do not resolve neatly into moral, sexual, or social frames but live in what Foucault maladroitly calls the "happy limbo of a nonidentity."[54] Or they might be Wittig's ideal readers, resistant to thinking of sexuality in terms of stable binaries. Each of these examples forsakes the usual formulations of personal identity – what Wendy Brown dubs the "multicultural mantra [of] race, class, gender, sexuality"[55] – and instead holds onto a broader social and political field of experience. They are like those readers "off to the side," who can recognize varying scenes of interpellation, may participate in these scenes themselves, but resist prescripted responses. This attention to audiences might be a way to move past the curious paradox of Anglophone identity politics – that identity politics has created both a tendency to naturalize identity as well as revolts against these efforts to fix and stabilize. It might offer a different means to respond to the "explosion and proliferation of identities"[56] by countering these with an audience schooled in techniques to manage such proliferations, and guide their response.

[54] I use this contested phrase from Foucault's introduction to *Herculine Barbin dite Alexina B* deliberately. Among Anglophone readers familiar with this text (and Judith Butler's critique of Foucault's introduction in her *Gender Trouble*), the phrase connotes a romanticized world pre-identity. For Francophone readers, the phrase is more complicated. The introduction did not appear in the original French text; it was briefly included in Gallimard's 1994 edition (with a key paragraph removed), and has not been included in subsequent editions. The phrase might be colored by translation (*heureux* in French can also mean 'fortunate'). It also might mean something different to Foucault's initial audience, the 1979 Congress of Arcadie, an audience that defined itself as "homophile" in apparent contrast to "homophobe" – a moniker that skirts any positive claim of personal identity. By one of his biographers, Foucault's address has been framed as "a deliberate stance. He was paying tribute to what Arcadie had represented before the beginnings of gay liberation and expressing his annoyance at the way a younger generation tended to dismiss it" (Macey, 363). Rather than being a call to correct the record or to save Foucault from himself, these details suggest that different audiences (American, French, gay, straight, queer, scholarly) likely read this phrase in different ways depending on their audience position. *Herculine Barbin* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), xiii.

[55] Brown, *States of Injury*, 61.

[56] Jeffrey Weeks, "Remembering Foucault," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 14, no. 1/2, *Special Issue: Studying the History of Sexuality: Theory, Methods, Praxis* (Jan.–April 2005): 186–201, 194.

The authorial potential for public audience grows out of its ability to leverage its sense of dislocation into interpretive agency. Following Butler's adaptation of Althusser for politics, it has become commonplace to think of persons as interpellated – as called into existence and defined by another's words ('Hey you there!'). Psychoanalytic theories, however, help us to recognize that interpellation does not entirely define a person. There is always a remainder. This remainder is other than the bodily remainder of philosophic subjectivity. It encompasses those fragments of experience that do not coalesce and cohere, and that escape beyond the usual frames of intelligibility. If Butler says that "to be unreal" is to find oneself denied "access to the human,"[57] I would differently situate these remainders as a haunting. They are the fantasized futures left over from former practices and contexts; they are remainders from another time and place that cannot easily be archived or settled into the present.

In his own work on identity and membership, Michael Warner suggests that this multifariousness is more than an embrace of multiple identity attachments. It involves a dynamic circulation, one whose "success depends on the recognition of participants and their further circulatory activity, and people do not commonly recognize themselves as virtual projections. They recognize themselves only as being already the persons they are addressed as being and as already belonging to [a] world…"[58] To mobilize the effects of circulation, one might amplify the role of audience. After all, frame-breaking is not just a question of individuals and their motivations – in engaging the conventions that structure either written or public address, it relies on audience reception. One might extend the proliferation of publics in Warner's work to argue generically that any audience has *two* means to respond to political claim or interpretive framework. On the one hand, these audiences respond based on their lived experience – their actuality, their present, what is most ready-at-hand. On the other hand, they are also members of a hypothetical, interpellated audience for which that framework is designed.[59] This audience is appealed to as a "*corrupted* reader … [and presumptively asked] what were that reader's beliefs, engagements, commitments, prejudices and stampedings of pity

[57] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 218.

[58] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 114.

[59] Literary theorists define the first audience as the "narrative audience" or sometimes the "flesh-and-blood audience." The second audience, interpellated by the author, is the "authorial audience." Benford, "'Listen to My Tale,'" 331. Occasionally, these same audiences are named the narrative audience and authorial audience, respectively. Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 26.

and terror?"[60] This audience is "corrupted" only in that it is presumed to have certain qualities – those "stampedings of pity and terror" – that will guide their reactions. Already we have seen the creation of interpellated audience in Freud's "Question of Lay Analysis" – Freud's ventriloquy of his exchanges with the skeptical Impartial Person reads like a lesson in audience reception. Foucault's "historical fiction" likewise tests these capacities of dual audience membership. Each of his books opens with a tableau designed to unsettle and resettle his audience. His dystopic power/knowledge notwithstanding, Foucault trusts to his readers' abilities to follow him into an unconventional discursive space.[61] These audiences, and the gap they manifest between dominant and unconventional responses, ultimately authorize the new interpretive practices associated with psychoanalytic and philosophic critique. They follow Freud and Foucault in the claims that psychoanalysis is *like* education and medicine both, that modern society is organized *like* the Panopticon. Again, their authorization concretizes that "breaking point" where the usual forms of intelligibility fail and the composition of new discourses results.

In politics, interpretive frameworks might rely (implicitly or explicitly) on certain political ideologies, stereotypes, or affective reactions. Already we recognize that political elites or the media offer contextual cues to prompt a response – for example, Republicans insist on the language of family and fidelity to praise one candidate and disparage another. Within American politics, political psychologists study "framing effects" as a matter of course to understand how stereotypes, new information, and standards of accuracy shape individual preferences and beliefs.[62] Where political psychology assumes the production of these frames by political elites (and analyzes primarily their durability), any turn to "frame-

[60] Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 26. Rabinowitz clarifies that there is no "pure" audience or reading to be had; audiences are "corrupted" differently in reference to different texts.

[61] Indeed, much was made of these demands in the report on his original doctoral thesis by the examining committee of the generally staid Collège de France. Georges Canguilhem, "On *Histoire de la folie* As an Event," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[62] The political psychology literature on "framing effects" (associated with the American Politics subfield of political science) is vast; my point here is simply to suggest that political theorists might give more attention to the elites and media effects that this literature has identified as politically salient. Jamie Druckman offers a useful overview of this literature and its evolution, along with its normative implications, in "Public-Elite Interactions: Puzzles in Search of Researchers," with Dennis Chong, in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Public Opinion and the Media*, ed. Robert Y. Shapiro and Lawrence R. Jacobs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

breaking" asks under which conditions such frames could be dismantled. In politics as in literature, "conventions are not in the text waiting to be uncovered, but in fact *precede* the text and make discovery possible in the first place."[63] The juxtaposition of literary theory and political psychology suggests that intervention into framing effects is not limited to elites alone; one need not see elites as "producers" of interpretive frameworks with citizens as the obvious and only "consumers." Instead, as the examples given here show, persons learn both from and orthogonal to conventions of interpretation. What if these skills were amplified and deployed politically?

As Foucault's use of historical fiction demonstrates, the gap between these conventions and the reading audience can strategically be widened and leveraged so as to contest usual interpretive conventions. When the divide between these two audiences grows, it becomes harder to cover over what Butler calls "the derivative status of authorship" in which an interpretive frame can remain parasitic on the conventionalized utterances. Instead, the break in the signifying frame calls attention to the instability of authorship, and prompts audience members to ask on what grounds should one frame hold sway over another. Rather than being a moment of reproduction, frame-breaking has a different, potentially productive effect. The tug between two different audience responses allows members either to affirm adhesion to one audience, or to seize the moment to redefine themselves as a different collective with different shared concerns. This figuration of a new collectivity neither occurs *ex nihilo* nor is fully captured by what comes before. The effect of denying one audience membership is to begin to make present and real the possibility of another. Where strategies of unmasking or scandal stall in the moment of provocation, frame-breaking prompts a more directed reflection on the rejection of one membership and the articulation of another. If Wendy Brown in *States of Injury* asks, "What if we sought to supplant the language of 'I am' … with the language of 'I want this for us?'"[64] then these strategies seek to move this question yet further away from individual responsibility and to ground it in material, socially specified relations. Falling back on the recursive relativity to parse what such an audience might be, though, makes this experience more than one of personal self-extension. Rather than denying or deferring any role in the authorization of people, claims, or events, those implicated must authorize new

[63] Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 27.
[64] Brown, *States*, 75.

compositions of events and their audience. Such an authorship might be read as one form of that "slow, patient labor of giving form to freedom."[65] Thus the composition of events opens and is put in play before a broader audience.

Some examples, taken from the American experience with political relations of dependency and slavery, might serve to illustrate how frame-breaking and composition achieve these effects. The display of the confederate flag above a state capitol, for example, could be framed against American identities variously "black-and-whitened";[66] around identities of North and South complicated by the reverse migration of African-Americans from North to South;[67] or against a mythologized relation to history inflected by Civil War enactments and secession balls.[68] Each of these frames offers a complicated relation to the past, one that does not neatly resolve into personal identity. Each of these frames also captures the notion that acts are often enactments, enactments whose meaning makes clear distinctions difficult between 'then' and 'now,' or 'us' and 'them.' Or one might turn to the snapshots taken by American military personnel at the Abu Ghraib prison and turn them against their spectating audiences. What is alternately revealed or concealed by framing these snapshots against the photojournalism of Vietnam? Against a broad range of international acts of torture? Against the everyday practices of American prisons? Or they could be more pointedly juxtaposed to the lynching postcards that circulated across North and South

[65] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 319.

[66] Du Bois uses this phrase in *Souls of Black Folk*, ed. David Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987).

[67] Again, the works cited here cannot adequately represent current scholarship on this topic. They are suggestive for their framing choices: Isabel Wilkerson balances three personal narratives against 1,200 interviews and historical research in order to chronicle the migration of African-Americans from the South between World War One and the 1970s in *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010). Ira Berlin situates this migration against four American migrations: the trans-Atlantic passage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the movement from coastal East to inland South in the 1800s; the Great Migration of the twentieth century; and the current immigration from Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. See Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2009). More recently, Clement Price and William Frey have used U.S. census reports from the last forty years to chart a "reverse migration" of African-Americans from North to South.

[68] South Carolina held a Secession Ball in 2010 to commemorate the decision made 150 years ago to secede from the United States. Organizers (from an assortment of groups, including the Confederate Heritage Trust and Sons of Confederate Veterans) framed the ball as a fundraiser to honor Southerners who fought for states' rights. The NAACP organized a protest against this event.

alike in 1930s and 1940s America, and now as the exhibition *Without Sanctuary?*[69] More than being notorious cultural artifacts, the photos and postcards recall the unsettling instability of psychic enactments that also disrupt boundaries between past and present. They move personal experience into public view, and read public spectacle against the framing of changed social conventions. This circulation brings different interpretive frames into contact: the frames of popular photography; of postal circulation and legal address; of a naturalized violence in the face of difference; of legal standing's failure to secure moral dignity. These juxtapositions further exaggerate the divide between interpellated and public audiences. In its original setting, the "interpellated audience" presumed was a society predisposed to see lynchings as public event rather than criminal act, and a state that condoned their postal circulation. Frame-breaking confronts contemporary audiences not just with "proof" of violent acts but with the more illusive interpretive regimes that sustained their circulation. Contemporary audiences find themselves faced with the challenge of narrating the divide between the interpellated audience and whatever is their own position. Frame-breaking, then, offers the potential to leverage these different audience memberships in surprising ways. Its friction traces the incompatibility of legal, moral, and social orders. Additionally, it shifts discourse away from questions of individual motivations and acts, and towards questions about the field of experience that sustains collective response.

Provoking any political change based on audience response is not guaranteed, however. No matter how discomforting the example of *Without Sanctuary,* the exhibition reads just as easily within the impetus to "lead before the eyes with images," leaving change portentous but unrealized. How might efforts to "compose the event" do more? One response might argue that the process of recursive rereading shifts and changes as it enters public space. This rereading becomes more clearly a question of public audience, and of the contributions of its acquiescence and authorizations. Rereadings similar to those Zerilli performs in her own work become pushed into public space and more insistently historicized in

[69] These photographs were recently published in a collection entitled *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe, NM: Twin Palms Publishers, 2010), a collection that has traveled across the United States since 2000. Some of the images from the original book can now be found online at http://withoutsanctuary.org. The exhibition has toured the United States (including Atlanta, GA; Jackson, MS; New York; Cincinnati, OH) and abroad (Marseille, London). Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin purchased the collection for the Center for Civil and Human Rights Partnership, which is set to open in 2014. In the meantime, the exhibition continues to travel.

terms of authors and audiences. But the contributions of psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practice to questions of authorship and authority suggests something more. They suggest the need to work through the experience of divestment, and to recognize that such work of undoing might be distinct from joining together to fashion new narratives.

Attention to the inability of something like the Atlanta exhibition to be assimilated in any one frame would draw attention to the friction between multiple contexts or registers (here, social structures, political order, and moral choice). Once again, the recursive relativity of the psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic relationship becomes important. The abandonment of the language of witnessing, testimony, and trauma, as well as efforts to police domains of authority and their legitimacy, gives a porousness to the forms of audience response available. Audience response becomes more pliable and its effects less certain. Recursive relativity offers a variety of possible forms to house this audience response and elaborate the conditions of its working-through. The relations serve as a containing form in which the affective content of this response can be engaged. Frame-breaking relies on a metaphoric competence to counter and challenge such frames while also testing other possibilities. Metaphoric competence in psychoanalysis entails the management of resemblances. Its authorship is not just that of remembering and repetition – efforts to recall a signal image or event and make it present and manifest. It is also a working-through, a therapeutic action oriented toward a future with new narratives and a different ethical articulacy. These three movements (remembering, repeating, and working-through) are movements of a kind of survival; they are efforts to recall a history, endure its painful associations and its pleasures, and to find a way to live with and past it. The public experience of vulnerability changes as it moves from affectless adjudication toward an effort to endure a discomfort or uncertainty collectively; to resist its ready foreclosure; and to test different interpretive frames and the worlds they open up. If public audiences are newly taken to listen, paraphrase, and gradually rewrite, then their response should unfold differently when faced with multiple sense-making frameworks. As enactments, these three movements are just as much inflected with fantasy as with memory. Fantasy is "what establishes the possible in excess of the real"; it marks previous contingent distinctions between wishes and wants, and opens conversations about where and how we draw these distinctions. The risk is always that individual

[70] Hannah Arendt laments this personal quietism in "What is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future*, 96.

audience members will "retreat to their own worlds of meaning"[70] and to insist on stable terms. The containing form of these relationships, however, seeks to permit the expression of that urge while forestalling outright withdrawal. They suggest the need to seek out other containing spaces with a similar capacity to organize symbolic engagements.[71]

The temptation to retreat to one's own world of meaning attests to the difficulty in making these activities of frame-breaking and composition into more than the product of individual judgment. And yet the nature of modern mass politics suggests that personal judgment will never be enough to counter the organized effects produced by media and political elites. Media and political elites complicate efforts at figuration and collective coordination toward new goals. Elites have their own investments and greater access to the cultural and economic resources that impinge on interpretation and its circulation. To counter the effects of political elites in societies that are irrevocably modern, mass societies, one might lean harder on the language of 'education' as an institution with its own circulation and outreach into society. Education might go some distance toward opening up participation in public audience and training individuals to navigate its interpretive channels. And yet, despite gains in access to higher education, it often remains beyond the reach of many, and certainly does not offer the personal interactions at the heart of psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic models. That education at all levels is succumbing to the economic language of use-value further hobbles its contribution to any crisis of authority. University education differs enormously from the "second educations" offered by psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic models. In an effort to distinguish education from manipulation, these models draw on unusual dynamics, and in particular demand that educators alternate between their roles as experts and as continued neophytes before emergent puzzles. Within the modern university, as the activities of research and teaching become pulled apart, and as universities become modeled on corporations dispensing expertise, the interaction between these roles also halts. Instead, universities become partisan in resolving any "crisis in authority" by promising solutions to quests of discovery, and "best practices" to questions of conflicting interests and responsibilities.

The difficulty in finding a social institution that might cultivate these political skills in authorship calls attention to a second temptation: namely, the assumption that the dyadic constitution of citizens precedes

[71] Jessica Benjamin, "The Primal Leap," 54.

any strong articulation of political posture or claim. Protective of citizens from elite manipulation, the move is to "insulate the process of their formation from party politics" – a move Lisa Disch has found in democratic theorists as diverse as Iris Marion Young, David Plotke, Nancy Rosenblum, and Jane Mansbridge. Investments in claim and position "are formed by practices of public reason to secure the independence and autonomy of citizens' judgment against the opportunistic communications of elites."[72] On this point, psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices fare better. Differently from other dialogic encounters, psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices resolutely offer a *Nacherziehung* of a different kind; they are second-, post-, and after-educations that seek to grapple with the *inability* to insulate individuals from relations of power. Their advantage over other models lies in their ability to teach persons to evaluate truth claims in the absence of a neutral standpoint. But what if these strengths were intensified by seeking other "intermediate spaces" more deliberately beyond those dialogic?

In Foucault's own writing on the changing place for the university, Foucault urges philosophy to take to the streets.[73] Rather than emphasizing the critical capacities of citizens (and so undoing the work to recover embodied practices and publics), one might take Foucault at his word and return to old-fashioned organizing. Although political organizing is now most frequently associated with campaigns, earlier iterations drew on existing social networks precisely to counter the circulation of influence and to find shelter in a different kind of intermediate space. Often we forget that the political activism of the 1960s drew on multiple social institutions (but most notably African-American churches) and offered its own educational training. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organized citizen schools to teach basic literacy and political education. The SCLC, along with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), held numerous workshops to train its associates in strategies of civil disobedience.[74] And with the Poor People's Campaign, the SCLC likewise struggled to organize around structural conditions of dependency in addition to raced identities. These efforts, as well as the organization around the

[72] Lisa Disch, "Towards a Mobilization Conception of Representation," *American Political Science Review* 105.1 (February 2011): 100–14.

[73] Foucault, "La philosophie structuraliste permet à diagnostiquer ce qu'est 'aujourd'hui'," in *DE* 1, 609.

[74] Records for these citizen schools and workshops are now held at the Pickler Memorial Library of Truman State University in Missouri.

Montgomery Bus Boycott and Brown v. Board of Education, remind us that what we now take to be iconic images or moving instances of frame-breaking were carefully crafted, debated, and tested so as to broaden the reach of these moments beyond those immediately present.[75]

One might also give greater attention to the influence of the media on practices, discourse, and audiences. Political theorists fare best in framing these questions in terms of persons, roles, responsibilities, and relationships. We have numerous theories that address the position of the critic or the intellectual. Moving these pre-occupations with authority and expressivity into an explicitly public sphere dominated by the media becomes harder. The media, after all, has greater ability to offer a counter-frame to the Atlanta exhibition and to coordinate any public response. Rather than relying on the imagistic force of the exhibition alone, what groups beyond the media might organize the kind of public, ongoing conversation that might elevate this moment to something other than a one-time cultural event? In raising this question, one might consider political psychologist Susan Herbst's claim that the media is a unique social institution. Its omnipresence makes it "clear that media conduct a surveillance of all institutions and are in fact the environment within which our conventional institutions fight to maintain authority, dignity, and effectiveness."[76] A social institution itself, the media is partisan in the very debates it reports on and the fights it calls. Once again one might turn to Michael Warner's work to engage these questions of public engagement, audience, and media. His work on publics and counterpublics has gone far in breaking up the monolith of "the public" by introducing questions of audience and circulation, and complicating the relation of dominant public and counterpublics. Warner's work might be furthered by thinking about when and where practices in authorship cluster: what combination of interpretive agency and structural conditions enables public audiences to exercise authorial capacity. Quite simply, at present we lack a concrete vocabulary to confront mediated exchanges and work them back to politics.

This claim is contentious. Certainly I do not mean to overlook the work of Jacques Rancière, among others, on mediated exchanges and regimes of representation. And I also do not mean to slight those who seek to recover the experiences and vocabularies of embodiment. It has become harder, however, to think about how these experiences might be

[75] The roots of the Montgomery bus boycott date to 1954 and efforts by the Women's Political Council (founded in 1946) to target Jim Crowe practices on city buses.

[76] Susan Herbst, "Political Authority in a Mediated Age," *Theory and Society* 32 (2003): 481–503, 500.

elevated to public discourse and worked back to politics. This juxtaposition of frame-breaking and composition suggests that narrative might be refashioned into a more pointed political tool. It need not become hegemonic, oriented to closure, or reliant on an individualized subject. It is only one political tool among many. However, efforts to "compose the event" might offer a way to narrate the experience of uncertainty that frame-breaking unavoidably provokes, while at the same time testing and evaluating possible collective responses. These will always come at a cost, but a cost measured against those vulnerabilities mitigated, the agency achieved (however provisionally), and the freedom exercised.

Some twenty-five years into the 24-hour news cycles, the so-called "bitch slap" cycle generated by blogosphere reporting that virals out of control, the need to understand the workings of political and interpretive authority has never been stronger. New information technologies are more powerful, more creative, more ingenious than ever; they also have entirely altered the way that individuals access and frame news information. In the wake of the Shirley Sherrod scandal, in which the daughter of a Freedom Rider was sold down the river as a putative racist, politico Van Jones (himself caught up in an earlier media maelstrom) wrote, "Anyone with a laptop and a flip camera can engineer a fake info-virus and inject it into the body politic. Those with cable TV shows and axes to grind can concoct their own realities. The high standards and wise judgments of people like Walter Cronkite once acted as our national immune system, zapping scandal-mongers and quashing wild rumors. As a step toward further democratizing America, we shrunk those old gatekeepers and ended up weakening democracy's defenses. Rapidly developing communication technologies did the rest."[77]

Leaving aside the faint whiff of paternalism that accompanies the nostalgia for simpler times, Van Jones's commentary is notable for the metaphors it relies on to frame and depoliticize its plea. The over-extended rhetoric of disease first displaces all responsibility onto clearly identifiable "bio-terrorists," and then moves to a just-as-clear confrontation between impersonal disease and personable experts. By the end of the passage, Van Jones has made the problem one that belongs to "us." He suggests, however, that "we" defer authority for this problem and instead cast it as the undesirable byproduct of a democratization and science gone awry, with the result that that has made news circulation and interpretation increasingly accessible. The progressive resiting of agency in Van Jones's

[77] "Shirley Sherrod and Me," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2010.

commentary neatly encapsulates the philosophic progression in thinking of authority from the early modern protection of citizens against lions and tigers; to the late modern calculations of doctors and experts, to an as-yet imperfectly understood and only potentially radical democracy. To his credit, Van Jones resists criticizing technologies and instead urges that participation in *l'actualité* not remain the province of talking heads or media entrepreneurs. Taking on the project of recognizing the complexity of human beings, and of judging the evolution of persons rather than a single flash of personality, is an educational task. It is also a task that demands that authority be rethought on the terms of authorship and interpretation rather than as the retrospection of legitimacy onto mere assertion of position. That someone like Shirley Sherrod, whose life and words reflect the complexity of American racial heritage, could be so profoundly miscast and misread signals the need for a different set of "reading practices" for politics that might allow citizens to resist and reframe the composition of events.

## From Relations of Control to Relations of Composition

The "crisis" of authority changes this process in important ways. Times of crisis generally speaking bring with them demands for recurrent articulations, for re-articulations as part of its constant work of reassessment. To say that authority itself is in crisis, rather than critique a single issue dimension, is to point to a deeper unsettlement in how we organize claims, evidence, and intelligible order. The effects on speech-activity will be profound. The activity of articulation and rearticulation is more than the work of revision or a shoring up of claims already made. Writing about the nexus of power and knowledge that structures and illuminates that "field of intelligible things," Foucault claims it necessary "to follow the breaking points which indicate its emergence."[78] When Foucault writes these words in *What Is Critique?* – an essay that originates as an address to the same philosophic society as in *What is an Author?* – he has in mind a strategic "eventialization" undertaken by the critic, one that returns to "the field on interactions" rather than seeking "a fundamental given, [or] a unique principle of explanation." In the spirit of this work that itself was "associated with a domain of possibility and consequently

[78] Foucault, "What is Critique?" in *What is Enlightenment?* ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 397.
[79] Foucault, "What is Critique?," 397.

of reversibility,"[79] the composition of events might open this process to more people and materialize it as political strategy. If frame-breaking and composition offer one way, one strategy to achieve this effect, then its "perpetual mobility" (evoking Nietzsche's host of metaphors) can reconstruct as much as transform. An ethical restlessness remains here, to be sure. Ideally, however, that restlessness can itself motivate the pursuit of stronger practices of freedom and ones that maximize the potential for interpretive agency on the part of the governed. And in the interim it offers a different way to respond to conflicted division between disintegrating and overstabilized selves, one that can be meaning-laden. Efforts to reconstruct, re-articulate are ways of living within a set of cultural structures whose present meaning and practices may well be questionable and exhausted. But they may also be opportunities to suggest that something about these old structures and their ideals has not been grasped.

Whereas this chapter began by thinking through the possibilities of metaphor and enactment for politics, in its concluding pages it has moved toward a more reflexive theorization of the use of metaphor itself. Even as critical theory in its various manifestations has become comfortable with the claim that interpretive and political position cannot easily be separated, it lacks a ready vocabulary by which to theorize these entwinements and their unevenness across community. In particular, it cannot account for those moments when political or interpretive position vis-à-vis the present are differently weighted. Foucault has often been castigated on these same grounds: of assuming a certain transparency in his own argumentative position such that his relation to truth is itself unproblematic. In part, these critiques suggest that Foucault's maneuvers should be "read" in terms of methodological innovations rather than as themselves proleptic – they are seen to trouble disciplinary boundaries that regulate distinctions between truth and falsity rather than lived (or even political) distinctions between the two. And indeed, historian Jacques Léonard comments that Foucault "ne *ressent* pas toujours, *de l'intérieur*, toutes les réalités du passé" ("doesn't feel from the inside, all of the realities of the past").[80] While one might accuse such an analysis of itself being politicized – it finds particular resonance among critical theorists

[80] Translation mine. See Jacques Léonard, "L'historien et le philosophe," in *L'Impossible prison*, ed. Michelle Perrot (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980). Gérard Noiriel makes a similar comment (but mutes the Nietzschean connotations) when he writes that Foucault "didn't live within his facts but spoke to them from the outside." See "Foucault and History: The Lessons of a Disillusion," *Journal of Modern History* 66 (September 1994): 547–568.

who disparage either the bourgeois focus on "words and things" and the resulting inattention to the "silences" of the marginalized, or the lack of attention to structural positioning – the fact remains that Foucault's critiques read most easily as claims of analysis rather than advocacy – and a comfortably intellectual analysis at that.

Nevertheless, and differently from Foucault's earlier critical postures,[81] the practices of *parrhesia* seem to offer Foucault an opportunity to theorize his own position. Writing before the explosion of technologies into modern life, Foucault's own efforts to live by his words seem nearly quaint. When Foucault theorizes listening (what others might term "audience reception") as an equal counterpoise to fearless speech, he initially writes to transform the social dyad of speaker and listener. The haptic speech that binds both parties symbolically re-orients the entire person, rather than touches on a single sense; it creates an environment that "resonates not just at the level of voice, but at that of meaning."[82] That is, for all that social and political relationships form the basis of individuals' existence – and any given parrhesiastic encounter – as the encounter progresses these relationships become more explicitly compositional. Despite the risk and asymmetry of these relationships, they are not relations of command; the burden of this book has been to argue that they consciously sidestep those scenes of address (such as Althusserian interpellation, Nietzschean scenes of punishment, the Freudian primal scene) that rely on social and symbolic relations of command and obedience to generate obligation and responsibility from punishment and guilt. The dynamics of *parrhesia* displace the ability to question and direct conversation onto the interlocutor; they release the status of "speaker" from formal or institutional position; and they juxtapose spoken claim against the trajectory of action.

How might metaphors broach psyche, politics, and discourse so as to organize more far-reaching changes to sense-making frameworks? Concurrent with his late lectures, Foucault describes himself in interviews no longer as a historian or a writer of historical fiction, but as a "*journaliste de l'actualité*."[83] One plausible reading of Foucault's journalistic claims, situated against his claims that *parrhesia* works with *l'actualité* (also the French term for 'the news'), is that Foucault sought to innovate a set of interpretive structures divorced from disciplinary institutions and

[81] David Owen, "The Contest of Enlightenment," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 25, Spring 2003: 35.

[82] Didier Anzieu, *Skin Ego*, 172.

[83] Documented in David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Vintage, 1995), 462–63.

closer to political event. On such a reading, journalism would encompass the ability to frame and narrate a set of unfolding events and so to participate in the elevation of certain moments above the flotsam and jetsam of quotidian life. Closer to the ground than the retrospection of philosophy, Arendtian storytelling, or social science, such journalism achieves a more targeted intervention in the blur of actuality and interpretation. Foucault thus teaches readers both to break and compose – he presupposes a certain kind of corrupted audience that is inclined to read according to certain rules (of philosophy, history, etc.), he sets out to thwart their expectations, and then (with equal parts playfulness, malice, and frustration) he criticizes the professional academics for being naïve readers unable to follow his lead. Is the implication here that we are to adopt this posture of the historical philosopher or philosophical historian?

Likewise, throughout this book I have appealed to my own readers and to certain conventions that "corrupt" them – that push them to seek ethical exemplars, to resist deliberately anachronistic readings, to want an answer to the political question 'what is to be done?' I have used each of these conventions to entice the reader along, picking up and setting down one sense-making framework after another as each becomes exhausted. Are Foucault's late lectures to be read as a literary effort of self-extension, as a revisitation of classical moral psychology, as the rudiments of a new political way of being? Or do they offer a practice and an exercise in extension through metaphor – an opportunity to engage in the crafting and manipulation of metaphor itself, to see how many in the audience one can entice to think alongside?

Where usually the work of "frame-breaking" is designed to explode convention by using dislocation to call attention to automated responses, Foucault's attention to *parrhesia* might be read as a surprising effort to examine the dynamics by which a new frame might be constructed. His readings offer an interesting attempt to understand when and how to resist closure – and when to acknowledge that a moment has already passed, that its potential for growth is past, and that closure requires the letting-go of *désassujétissement*.

# Conclusion

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and, by the same token, save it from the ruin which, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable.
>
> Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Education"

> What moves me politically, and that for which I want to make room, is the moment in which a subject – a person, a collective – asserts a right or entitlement to a livable life when no such prior authorization exists, when no clearly enabling convention is in place.
>
> Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*

## Vulnerability and Agency

Modern politics has yet to come to terms fully with the democratization of mass politics. If those social scientists writing in the aftermath of World War Two had the not-unreasonable belief that greater and more political analysis might counter the manipulation of prejudice, the appeal to greater knowledge has come to have the opposite effect.[1] Cognizant that statistical presentations of information can be purposively distorted, the American public has, to all appearances, come to distrust all information regardless of source or accuracy. Overwhelmed by easy access to a variety of resources, it becomes up to each person to aggregate these

[1] For a sympathetic, compelling, and exceedingly well-researched account of this effort, see Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

analyses for herself. The challenge of democratizing processes of authorization, and so participating in political authority, cannot be simply a question of appealing to more or better knowledge. It must also speak to those practices that would prepare persons to assess, and sometimes break, the usual interpretive frames, and to engage in the work of composition: composition of persons, claims, and events.

The reading of authority as authorship, laid out over the preceding pages, works to reclaim an agential dimension of discourse. The initial focus on interpersonal relationships and the roles associated with them works hard to acknowledge and situate the historical situation of language and self-formation. The hope is to generate a way to talk about broader discourses that is neither outside of time (by virtue of being ahistorical, mystical, or transcendent) nor one that lapses into a yet-more-esoteric scholasticism that makes scholars into the new clerics. Such are also the standards held up by Edward Saïd in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* when he lambastes a certain caste of intellectuals (with a distinctly French flavor) for seeking refuge either in the gnomic utterances of academic specialization, or for displacing a certain kind of mysticism to the figure of the Other.[2] Both of these changes would implicate subject-formation: the first by recasting the aristocratic dynamics of post-Enlightenment maturation onto secular rationality; the second by making subjectivity dependent on an unknown, inscrutable Other.

Without adopting the critical posture associated with Saïd, my analysis seeks to democratize the process of what one might call authority-formation as much as subject-formation, so as to make authority less the purview of experts. In so doing, it intervenes in the dynamics of authorization and representation that come to bind subjectivity and public. Over the course of the nineteenth century, authorization and representation were seen as twin components of both humanism and democratization. Changes in authorization tended to reflect changes to the old sociopolitical roles of aristocracy; debates about representation kept pace with the uneven extension of political membership. The two became bound through a rule of law that sought to govern the process by which representatives became authoritative and authorities subject to scrutiny before a public of those they represent. Reading Freud and Foucault alongside one another reveals how each differently explores how the relationship of subjectivity to public has been caught up in the modern contradiction of

[2] Saïd, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

appealing to absolute values while living out their impossibilities. Where Freud explores the centripetal power of those psychoanalytic practices that grapple with self-disintegration, Foucault analyzes the centrifugal forces that make ethical self-governance an accomplishment. In both instances these ethical "practices of the self" seek to push persons out into a more explicitly socio-political context. That is, these models suggest that the relations and practices of self-governance could be leveraged toward a rethinking of the terms of political governance.

If the ancient world from which they draw metaphors and models speaks less of subjectivity than of public persona, then Freud and Foucault live in a culture and a politics increasingly defined by an 'I.'[3] Foucault captures the gradual shift from public persona to private individual in "Omnes et Singulatim," one that leaves moderns with the unholy union of agonistic individual individuated within a socially conformist mass. He captures a paradox of modernity – namely, that even as bourgeois individuals seek to differentiate themselves from the political, market, and spiritual forces that made them, they do so using the homogenizing technologies developed by government, market, and spiritual regime. Claims to authorship and distinction quickly disappear within the forces of social circulation. My excavation of the "practices of the self" associated with both Freud and Foucault is an effort to think about the conditions under which the relationships of ethical conduct and governmentality might be turned instead into relationships of authority and authorization.

Contemporary political theory has turned to critique and the figure of the critic as an initial means to read the past, its moral categories, and whether its conventions can and ought continue to be authorized. On both intellectual and political terms, critical theory has struggled to respond to skeptics who confuse critique with criticism. A clear partisan of critical theory, I have sought to extend the claim that critique is indeed a political activity, and to think through the conditions under which it can have more sustained effect either on political subjects or their engagements. Toward this end, I have argued that readers become authors in their own right when they enter into a relationship of authority that negotiates the social and political terms of these readings through contest, and then begins to undo and rewrite the readings in actuality. The currency of these readings effaced, these emergent *topoi* offer a site

[3] The reference here is to Catherine Darbo-Peschanski, "The 'I' of the Inquirer: The Function of Critical Discourse" [1987], in *Antiquities*, ed. Nicole Loraux, Gregory Nagy, and Laura Slatkin, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: The New Press, 2001).

in which the connection between personal and collective symbol can be reworked.

As I have argued over the course of this book, the turn away from "the militant life" or "the specific intellectual" or the "parrhesiastic critic" is a turn toward a set of political interactions irreducible to individuals. Even as Freud and Foucault hold onto the language of self and individual, they do so in order to hold onto a kind of ethical subjectivity in which persons can be evaluated in terms of their words and deeds. The attention to relationships, however, signals that for all that our ethical institutions rely on individual responsibility in different ways, they further contain an expressive dimension – one that touches on courage, generosity, solidarity, among other qualities – inseparable from commitment to public context. These ethical qualities further cannot be cultivated by deliberation on first principles – nobody is "against" courage, generosity, or solidarity despite profound disagreements as to how such qualities are best expressed. And yet we have lost sight of what kind of public culture could be said to sustain these expressions on other than individualist terms. If the classic liberal categories of "public" and "private" will no longer do, then more recent work on "counter-publics" has underscored the fact that we need a new framework with which to think of over-lapping, multiple, non-geographic public audiences.

For modern politics to have a legitimating culture requires that other domains of human activity bear on politics without being reduced to it. Through their connection to the *topoi* of "intermediate spaces," psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices further seek to move persons from the siting of their personal lives to an awareness of how these in fact bear on public affairs. In such a manner, these intermediate spaces seek to meet late moderns where they are: in a public context dominated by liberal discourse. These intermediate spaces, however, have as their project to work past the insular individualism often associated with liberalism. Reading Freud alongside Foucault discloses two models of authority, each organized around a combative collaboration premised on an exchange of roles across participants. In both models, subject-formation unfolds on terms of asymmetry, but terms other than injury and suspicion. Freud contributes a psychology that examines why we invest in some relationships and not others. He develops a model of combative collaboration that does more than offer an experience of vulnerability and openness sought by diverse traditions within democratic theory. Indeed, the strength of psychoanalysis lies in its practical therapeutics, one that underscores the fragile conditions that conduce on trust. That psychoanalysis should rely

on such stringent conditions in order to intervene in the framing of a life also underscores the difficulty of the task (and that it should not be directly linked to a political program, even as politics should cultivate such intermediate spaces). Its *Nacherziehung* prepares persons to refashion their commitment to an ethical good life they claim for themselves, and forces them to confront the fact that such lives are not the product of choice. For his part, Foucault tenders a moral phenomenology that sharpens our understanding of how such relationships could generate norms of evaluation, and a set of interpretive practices that moves from these relationships to moments of cultural transvalorization and political engagement. Both thinkers find that these relationships offer a kind of "second-education" (*Nacherziehung*) – second to the explicit education of children, and second to the implicit *paideia* of culture – that finishes in a different set of interpretive strategies by which to assess persons, claims, and events as "authoritative."

In making my political arguments over the course of this book, I have operated from two assumptions. The first is that any starting point for political change must grapple seriously with the persistence of liberal democratic institutions. This assumption does not represent a principled commitment on my part to liberal tenets of democracy. It instead represents the baldly empirical claim that most western democracies are more liberal than not, and that political change needs to take this situation seriously as a starting point if politics is to move in a differently democratic direction. Paul Veyne, in his own reflections on Foucault, captures the starkness of this situation when he quotes Medea: "Everything has disappeared but I have one thing left: myself."[4] Foucault is right when he notes that revolutionary politics cannot simply declare anew its own absolute values. Living within liberalism's present contradictions and seeking to make its tensions productive rather than ones of disillusionment requires building a set of practices, first to deal with the discomforts of uncertainty and then to build up new sense-making frameworks to grapple with making political ends and ethical ends of a profoundly human authorship. Toward this end, developing a capacity for letting go – a letting-go of norms, habits, and conventions – is not a move born of apathy, self-indulgent withdrawal, or defeatism. Instead, it emerges from a recognition that the political energies of resistance have become bottled up between idealism and critique. If existing relationships (both

[4] Paul Veyne, "The Final Foucault and his Ethics," trans. Catherine Porter and Arnold Davidson, *Critical Inquiry* 20.1 (Autumn 1993): 1–9.

personal and political) no longer contain the possibility of growth, then substantive political change will begin by letting go and backing out of old practices and subjectivities so as to redirect their energies elsewhere.

With this end in mind, my second assumption, epistemological rather than empirical, has been that desire is not the best way to theorize these practices and subjectivities.[5] Letting go of existing political structures and subjectivities also means letting go of those interpretive frames to which we have become accustomed. Desire initially offered a powerful lens through which to denaturalize western philosophy's unacknowledged embrace of reason and rationality. For some time, theorists explored whether desire itself might be taken to be "outside" the binaries that structure politics and philosophy alike; whether it could fuel resistances and counter-practices; whether it could explain our ambivalence attachment to those structures that oppress and constrain. Insofar as much remaining political ambivalence often results from repressed desire that manifests as guilt, these analyses continue to be powerful. By shifting emphasis to emphasize instead those practices that seek to modulate refusal, curiosity, and innovation, my goal is to think seriously about how persons might come to make their desirous faculties constructive and articulate. For processes of authorization and authority to become democratic through more than participation requires that we think through the preparation necessary.

In this sense, "practices of the self" seeks to engage the paradox binding liberty and authority so as to authorize a politics whose original authority has all but evaporated. Freud and Foucault leverage those practices that enable ethical self-governance into a preparation for the challenges associated with political governance. Rather than exhorting persons to be more open, more responsive, and more vulnerable to others, the appeal to practices turns on the dynamics of educative relationships to authority. If Plato begins with the model of the just and well-organized *polis* to urge self-governance, then Freud and Foucault do the obverse. They use the practices of self-governance (learned in the context of a transference relationship) as an introduction *into* politics.

[5] Such a move is consonant with Foucault's turn to the ancients to find a morality – what he calls "our" morality – that is developed neither in relation to Law nor to Truth. And so he resists the usual readings of desire in the ancient world: "I am so disgusted by all those philosophic and anthropological considerations about desire, the ontology of desire, and so on. You can find either in the Lacanian posterity or the Derridean entourage, and so on… Well, in a way my book is a critical genealogy of the main of desire." See "Discussion with Foucault." Interview with Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus, April 21, 1983, p. 5 of ms D 250(6).

Where psychoanalysis stands out, and in a manner only dimly perceptible to Foucault, if at all, is in elaborating a new kind of speech reducible neither to the materiality of its claims nor the intentionality of its speakers. If Foucault initially describes the author-function in terms of a world in which "Material things already murmur a meaning that our language has only to evoke; and this language, from its most rudimentary project, already speaks of a being at the center of its nervous system (*comme la nervure*)," [6] then psychoanalysis gives voice and form to such murmurings and relieves them of their intransigent materiality. It offers some relief from the "deaf fear" of events that accompanies this talkative world of signs, of "that mass of things said, of the surging forth of all claims, of all the violence, discontinuity, struggling, disorder, and danger there might be." [7] Psychoanalytic enactments radicalize what philosophers and political theorists consider as performatives; operating in that "intermediate space" they blur the lines that analytically divide body and speech, fantasy and actuality, past and present. Where speech-acts take pleasure in the play between first-person and third-person authority, enactments intervene directly into this play.

Within Freud's corpus, these take the form of repetitions, equivocations, condensations, and the associations associated with neurosis – the creeping overlays of cobbled-together meanings not explainable in terms of conscious intent – that become symptoms of a sort, ones that are available to cultural interpretation and political manoeuvering (in the sense of "handiwork"). Thinking symptomatically, then, becomes not the move from symptoms to "discovery" of what they "really" mean – we are not driven to discover so flat-footedly – but a means of mapping one set of responses (seemingly unrelated and unprovoked) onto some constellation of events, inclinations, responses, questions, all themselves relating to the past. Authority ineluctably has us move between first and third persons; between 'I declare' and 'It is declared.' To ensure that authority is no more than a vacillation between these – that it is no more than power disingenuous – is to learn when and how to use which perspective. Returning to the opening claims of Chapter 1, one of the reasons why authority is so difficult – and yet so tempting – to stabilize as a concept is because it functions along both perspectives. To the extent that authority inheres in an act, it is easy to use authority and authoritative in an impersonal

[6] Michel Foucault, *L'Ordre du discours* [inaugural address given at the Collège de France] (Paris: Gallimard NRF, 1971), pp. 52–53.
[7] *L'Ordre du discours*, pp. 52–53.

register. From the perspective of psychic change, however, the challenge is to assert an authoritative claim that purports to be made on more than the whims of the first person. If the fear of hegemony in the public context is that some strong person or collective will be able to impose a regime of interpretation, then individuals need to be able to discern first person claims made under the guise of the impersonal. And in order to intervene more effectively in any framing of context, be it personal or collective, they also need a facility in knowing how and when their own first person claims could be so transformed. Where Freud binds remembrance and fantasy to make the present more immediate, Foucault turns the interpretive tools of psychoanalysis (the methods of remembering, repeating, working-through) into manipulables with a transformative potential that extends beyond self to politics.

If the Freudian model does a better job of outlining a historical mode that illuminates the personal in the collective and the presence in the past, then it falters at explaining the unevenness of these across a community. This limitation is less a cause for rejection than a spur to think about those dynamics that drive the cohering of community, first in the genre of myth, now via "historical fiction," perhaps later through haptic speech. While Theodor Reik could once write that *Totem and Taboo* was "the most important book of its kind … the standard illustration of what psychoanalysis can perform in the sphere of the [human] sciences,"[8] that this reading is no longer available to contemporary readers is also telling. It says something not about the "truth-value" of psychoanalysis but of the awkward space it occupies between science and literature. As both a therapeutics and, if not a science, then a coherent body of practices (whose claims seek to be verifiable according to a standard other than charismatic personality), psychoanalysis bears witness to the fracturing of truth-telling across several modes of discourse.

What Freud tackles therapeutically, Foucault tackles politically: the relationship of subjectivity to a publicly accessible, if not immediately intelligible, world. The radicalism in Freud's abandonment of his initial seduction theory lies in his relaxation of the connection between fact and person. Freud introduces not just doubt about the quality of motivations, but a deeper doubt about the place for concealment in speech. Foucault politicizes this unavoidable challenge of concealment and the restless movement of assessment and reassessment, the *cheminement*

[8] Cited in Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 8.

between words and deeds, the agitation across personal and collective practices. His return to the ancient world becomes a means to reconsider the relationship between rhetoric and politics. Rather than describing the entanglement of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, Foucault seeks to involve persons more directly in testing these, and in intervening in the conventions and naturalized hierarchies they create over time. Politics need no longer seek a divorce from rhetoric or an unmasking of its operations. If earlier models of rhetoric sought to emphasize either the transparency of speaker, the transparency of claim, or the transparency of public, then Foucault overturns these models. Not only is such transparency unavailable, but moderns must grapple with a very different kind of concealment. Concealment is not the mark of cloudy motives or outright deception. As personal and public persona become less clearly differentiated, awareness of the context and audience for signification must extend to form more active and knowledgeable participant-critics.

By virtue of a siting less dependent on the containing context of psychoanalysis – even though its publicity is also not that of a Habermasian public sphere – the mechanisms of trust on which *parrhesia* relies can more readily be adapted for politics, even as the price is a depersonalization of practice and a dimunition of intensity. Again these limits might be less failures than the limits of intensity sought in any politics. If analysts often discuss the hurt and loss sustained by the termination of an analysis, the depth of that attachment and its necessary inscrutability might be better suited to personal relations than to the wayward political relations inherited not even through testament.

These "failures" of politics remind us that psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* complement rather than compete with one another. In so doing, they also remind us that the secularization thesis is wrong. Secular politics does not "replace" religion – instead, as Talal Asad has argued, secular and non-secular (or symbolic and material) infuse one another and rely on each other for existence. Instead, we might differently approach the clash of signifying orders alongside Jacques Rancière. Rancière situates contemporary discourse as split between the logics of science and literature, with politics seeking to bridge the divide. The dynamics of that mediation should change, if the two terms change. If science has come to consider the world as an external reality to be grasped from a neutral standpoint, then literature denies the singularity of that perspective. Fantasies – of person, group or community; of times past and future – become something more than a mechanism for displacement of those cruelties that bespeak of irregularities in values. Rather than becoming

the bastard remainders born of failed ideals or false universals – the abject remainder of internalized contradiction – they become the opportunity for a kind of innovation. They offer a nub, recalcitrant and unassimilable, whose significance and potential varies kaleidoscopically by context. If the debates swirling around secularization have much to do with the nature of our dispossession (permanent or post-modern), our relation to ideals (lost and unrecoverable, or subject to ascetic discipline) and to conflict (as crisis or compromise, internal or cultural, motor or brake to democracy), then the *askesis* offered differently by Freud as Foucault steps to the side. Rather than being an austere ascetics, their practices seek to be innovative in a manner not entirely beholden to Judeo-Christian ethics or its broader sense-making frameworks. Chapters 6 and 7 have sought to move beyond Freud and Foucault and to tease out the dynamics of contemporary public audience that might be organized through something like haptic speech. The practices of public audience and such haptic speech might contribute to an interpretive housing strong enough such that classic political concepts and practices relate differently to one another. For this housing to be more than a new version of Weber's iron (or Wendy Brown's plastic) cage, modernized for the twenty-first century means that the formative experience they provoke for any given collective must be substantively different.

In the end, we need something like parrhesiastic practices, because in moments of ethical uncertainty, rules will be of no use – that is, moments of ethical uncertainty or ambiguity are, by definition, not structured, rule-bound contexts. While knowledge of moral law or moral imperatives – or even the more modest claim that these provide guidance – may help us to clarify our objectives and their consequences, in uncertain contexts these can do little more than offer points of reference.

For all of the clarity that might seem to accompany moral law, then, moral law has the possibility of hurting the vulnerable. In those instances where the demands of justice cannot be met, those who are dependent on moral law – to make meaning from their suffering, to guarantee outcomes, to sanction transgressors – lack the resources to provide moral value for themselves. The education to *parrhesia* and the combative collaboration of psychoanalysis have ethical force in individuals' ability to find resources for self-development in their relations with others. Generally these resources are thought of narrowly as the ability to inaugurate: that is, as the ability to craft raw potential into possibility and to create anew. And yet these resources also include the capacity for withdrawal and extraction: the ability to redirect basic affective investments away from moments of

injustice and toward a context pregnant with more possibility, with more nourishment, and so with greater potential for accomplishment. Control over one's capacity to dispose of one's curiosity and resolve enables others' morally deficient responses – responses of anger, envy, jealousy, evasion – to become opportunities to consider a turn away from a corrupt context that holds out little possibility for just remedy.[9] Once again, this turn away is not necessarily a turn inward, nor is it a withdrawal. After all, *parrhesia* rests on the basic relationality of individuals; the loss or collapse of one relationship does not entail the loss or collapse of *all* relationships. Instead, the motivation to hesitate, evaluate, and withdraw from failing relationships likewise motivates a person to redirect, to re-invest, and to renew by seeking a context that allows for greater possibility of moral agency. Although we seek and celebrate those extraordinary moments of politics when individuals – be it through a parrhesiastic, prophetic, philosophic, or revolutionary model of self-presentation and engagement – stand their ground, we ought equally value those moment of pause and redirection. Each requires ethical discretion in the engagement of political context. Both offer the experience of 'being moved.'

Recognition of this vulnerability helps us to return to the question of authority with a different eye; it allows us to recognize that in such a context, in which it falls to individuals to find their own moral horizon, vulnerability and strength must be equally present. Such a person must have the resources – resources of their own ethical self-development, a capacity to initiate relations with and toward others, the discretion to relate moral principle to context – that might give them strength. And yet possession or access to these resources alone is not enough; they need to be motivated, expressed, and externalized through the composition of an event or context capable of sustaining them. And so we must confront our own activity as readers, an activity that moves us from receptive audience to authors. No longer can the question be "what is to be done," nor the reply be an ideological denunciation of the other side. Instead, the recognition must, first, be an acknowledgement of something that late moderns have known for a while: that the audience imagined by political principle and the audience interpellated are not the same; that, second, critique results from the tension or resistance generated by these two positions; and third, that rather than shy away from these resistances or seek to reconcile them, we should seize them as symptomatic evidence of a newly authored conviction that has already sprung up "off to the side."

[9] Geoffrey Rees, *The Romance of Innocent Sexuality* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

**Educative Relationships to Authority and Public Culture**

Elaborating *parrhesia* and psychoanalytic technique into a haptic speech might be a way to respond to Foucault's claim that "Power is anything that tends to render immobile and untouchable those things that are offered to us as real, as true, as good."[10] Instead, *parrhesia* and psychoanalysis both seek to question "the real, the true, the good." They are motivated by a different kind of moral orientation, one that asks participants to reflect on the actual, on the unthought, and on the hazards of verisimilitude. These amount to a preoccupation with ethical excellence divergent from the political distinctions of aristocracy. Instead, Foucault describes this as a moral orientation composed of three elements: (1) "refusal to accept as self-evident the things that are proposed to us; (2) the need to analyze and to know, since we can accomplish nothing without reflection and knowledge – thus, the principle of curiosity; and (3) the principle of innovation: to seek out in our reflection those things that have never been thought or imagined. Thus: refusal, curiosity, innovation."[11]

The effect of these three elements in moral orientation finishes by being more than an injunction to critique. Even as "refusal, curiosity, innovation" might seem consonant with the questioning of critique or the intransigence of political resistance, the arguments developed throughout this book have sought to bind these three, ultimately psychological, elements into a more collaborative ethos that can draw the energy of resistance and critique into the dynamics for trust and creativity. As critics, we are both readers and inchoate authors. As readers of the past, we seek to make sense out of the conventions and categories that came before and to challenge their authorization given the absence of those who authored them. As authors, we rewrite as we read – that is, we seek to replace these conventions and categories in our own context and vernacular. The transition from readerly to authoritative modes requires something by way of education. It requires that we unlearn propositions about the world and its history that were never learned as empirical ones.

The education to accompany such an interpretive housing, as presented over the course of this book, bears some resemblance to what Gadamer had in mind when he wrote, "But the most important thing in

[10] "Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual." Interview with Michael Bess, Department of History at UC Berkeley, San Francisco, CA. November 3, 1980. held at IMEC, cote B.53/FCL2 A02–06.

[11] "Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual." Interview with Michel Foucault conducted by Professor Michael D. Bess (then a graduate student in the Department of History at UC Berkeley), November 3, 1980. Transcript and audio recording maintained by IMEC.

education is … the training in the *sensus communis*, which is not nourished on the true but on the probable, the verisimilar. The main thing for our purposes is that here *sensus communis* obviously does not mean only that general faculty in all men but the sense that founds community. [This communal sense] enables one to discover what is evident (verisimile)."[12] Gadamer goes on to say that "Education cannot … tread the path of critical research. Youth demands images for its imagination and for forming its memory." Vico knew as much, and so "he supplements the critica of Cartesianism with the old topica. This is the art of finding arguments and serves to develop the sense of what is convincing, which works instinctively and ex tempore, and for that very reason cannot be replaced by science."[13] The skill of working extemporaneously, at moments of disjuncture, and learning how to dispose of one's first responses is not self-evident. But any kind of training needs to capture the process involved in a *coming* to awareness, or the art of *finding* an argument. Likewise, this preparation to defy what seems to be an already-scripted future draws as much on the images of metaphor (*parabole*) and fantasy to guide intellect as it does on reason.

Gadamer's language recalls that often associated with Stanley Cavell and others writing in the perfectionist tradition. Over the course of this book, I have resisted that framework in part because I have sought to call attention to those relationships that structure the activity first of education and then of authorizing. I have set aside this framework less because I disagree with its philosophic aims than because its categories have come to impede its other, political goals. My shift from the register of aspect to the register of voice follows a similar shift made by Gérard Genette in his revision of the categories used by Tzvetan Todorov. His reason? To keep the emphasis on the *activity* of narrating. Voice more clearly captures the activity of authoring, and emphasizes the regimes that impede or permit it and the fluidity of supporting socio-political roles. Where *aspect* presumes that the person narrating is reliable – that she straightforwardly reports her perspective of events – *voice* instead distinguishes between person and persona. It realizes that those reporting on events are both participants and narrators of what occurs. If attention to aspect automatically adopts the perspective of this narrator, voice concentrates attention on the activity of narrating, and how it implicates "not only the person who carries out or submits to the action, but also the person… who reports it, and, if

[12] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum Books, 2006), pp. 18–19.
[13] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 18–19.

need be, all those people who participate, even though passively, in this narrating activity."[14] In addition to distinguishing speaking person and persona, voice further calls attention to their interlocutory partners. This language of voice would seem to be compatible with the psychoanalytic experience of enactments. Enactments capture the incomplete efforts at interpretation that accompany and overlay most performatives, as well as the insight that we are both participants and narrators of our life-activities. Likewise, *parrhesia* remains focused on the speaking subject (*sujet énonciateur*) rather than the claim spoken (*énoncé*).[15]

Although these differences may seem slight, they speak to the implications of the claim that truth (in general, but especially in politics) is not directly and publicly accessible – namely, that how we construe truth and truth-telling depends on the conditions that enframe truth claims as well as their content. Given the surfeit of information and meaning available to late moderns, increasingly we seek to evaluate the conditions and person surrounding a claim in addition to the content of the claim itself. And so Foucault can claim that where Heidegger sought to know the ground of truth, and Wittgenstein to know what one was saying in speaking truth, to Foucault's mind "the question is: How is it that there is so little truth in truth? (*d'où vient que la vérité soit si peu vraie?*)."[16] His claim is less an acerbic comment on the moral decadence of the day than the recognition that if we concede something about the undecidability of certain kinds of claims, then we need to seek an alternate index for their truthfulness. Emphasis shifts away from *what* is being expressed – implicitly or explicitly – to *how* something is being expressed and to what effect. This problematic returns us to Freud once we raise questions about the symbolic resonance of claims. For Freud, "narrative capacity" emerges from the ability to understand the

[14] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 213.

[15] The tradition associated with contemporary narratology begins with Russian formalists Viktor Shklovsky and Vladimir Propp, engages not just Todorov but also structuralist Roland Barthes, and has found a classic formulation in the work of Gérard Genette, Jonathan Culler, Peter Brooks, Franco Moretti, and Alex Woloch. Foucault was well-familiar with Propp and speaks at length about his work in a 1967 lecture in Tunisia entitled "Langage et Littérature" (audio recording available at IMEC). Foucault and Genette knew one another from their time at l'École Normale Supérieure in the early 1950s and both were members of the same PCF cell in the late 1950s. Foucault's further intellectual engagement with Barthes is well-known. And even though this tradition post-dates Freud, Freud's case histories serve as touchstones for literary theorists such as Culler and Brooks in revisiting the structuralist legacy and thinking through the ordering of master-plot.

[16] Recounted by Paul Veyne in "The Final Foucault and His Ethics," trans. Catherine Porter and Arnold Davidson, *Critical Inquiry* 20, Autumn 1991: p. 8fn1.

interactions between form (dream, memory, fantasy) and meaning; ethical orientation emerges from the relationship one develops between personal history and narrative capacity. Concerned to make this index for truthfulness more clearly collective and ethically robust, Foucault instead references ancient *phusiologia* and its association with the Pythian function of world-making. *Phusiologia* organizes practices into a *connaissance* that is immediate and returns persons to the space of community.

To reprise Gadamer's language, if the topica are just as important as critical interpretation, then change requires the ability to undo that sense of traumatic paralysis that halts narrative momentum and fixes meaning so as to make metaphor impossible. If the early moderns used the metaphor of leading strings to guide metaphors of political self-governance, and the late moderns used metaphors of maturity to historicize the pursuit of such independence, then Freud and Foucault first call our attention to the importance of metaphor and interpretation for politics, and then invite us to think about their simultaneous containment and displacement. Both psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic practices offer an intermediate space in which strategies of repetition and substitution take on a different force and direction such that they undo rather than consolidate public persona. Where psychoanalysis emphasizes the containing element of analysis that reknits relations of trust, then Foucault's "armature of the self" is at once protective and porous. Each offers "practices in uncertainty" to guide a different kind of movement, one whose preparation seeks to defy a future at once all-too-certain and all-too-unsteady.

What I have done in this book is to back away from the usual juxtapositions of expert/layperson, critic/novice, intellectual/public, and instead to work with the juxtaposition of educator/student. While experts and laypersons are presumed to be distinct, critics presumed to read differently than naïve audiences, and intellectuals distinguished from the mass of the public, the relation between educator and student offers a different relation between roles than the previous three. First, educators and students more readily change position. Students become educators, and, ideally, educators must (in their teaching and scholarly roles) deny the knowledge they have in order to incite discovery rather than world-weariness. Second, the roles of educators and students are not exhaustive, and vary by domain. And finally, as coffee mugs the world over remind ("Those who can't, teach"), educators are rarely mapped onto positions of vanguard leadership. Simply, educators and students have a different relationship to the organization of knowledge than these other three authoritative roles (or their more familiar Kantian versions of doctor,

spiritual guide, or political guardian). The relationship of educator and student potentially disrupts the juxtaposition, inherited from the early modern period, of authority against immature reason. As in psychoanalysis and *parrhesia*, this is not a neo-Aristotelian reciprocity.[17] Instead, when educators adopt the perspective of students (as they must in their own research in order to innovate; and in their teaching if they're any good), they are obliged to suppress their received knowledge and re-enter the world as naifs. They must open themselves up to being moved by some new image, and then think about how to carry others alongside them.

**Reclaiming Authority**

That these scaffoldings of meaning are provisional relieves some of the moral and political burden of "getting it right" even as that burden risks becoming a disingenuous excuse for patience and postponement. Such excuses and rationalizations are forever a risk of contemporary ethics and politics. They are a political strategem of sorts, a displacement of individual responsibility to attempt change onto collective inertia. In the context of a disciplinary individualism, one often camouflaged by the appeal to personal story, such excuses can further stabilize a liberal political order; narrative crystallizes the experience of politics on insistently subjective and individualized terms, while responsibility becomes displaced onto the impersonality of collective structures. The counter-cry of "the personal is political" is one attempt to foreclose such a displacement by making it ethically impermissible. Such a counter-move, however, has no response to the subjectivism that accompanies the collective denial of responsibility; if anything, to insist "the personal is political" is very nearly to reinforce the intuition that politics is reducible to voices heard and unheard, to stories told and covered-over. Experientially, that implication is itself disingenuous. If the aesthetic move is to tend equally to all particulars, then we are deafened by the "roar on the other side of silence"[18]; on political terms, the result is a pathos-fatigue that deadens the community

[17] Despite the arguably different place for conflict in Aristotelian politics, the exchange of roles within psychoanalytic and parrhesiastic encounters is far more visceral and actual. Epictetus, for example, introduces "man as a student of himself and his works, and not merely as a student, but also as an interpreter of these things" (*Discourses*, 1.6.12–20). For more on Aristotle and conflict, see Jill Frank, *A Democracy of Distinction: Aristotle and the Work of Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[18] The allusion is to George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. The full passage reads: "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and

rather than awakening it to moral responsiveness. Asymmetries are not the problem. Mapping them consistently onto a category of person, and then individuating any subsequent responsibility, is.

The language of education speaks to a culture now no longer marked by the vigor of youth and whose wartime failures in what should have been its age of maturity have left it transfixed by the experience of the uncanny: politically rooted in place, childlike in its moral dependencies lingering from another time, a time in which "children without clarity"[19] must accomplish a new ethics of articulacy. The *Nacherziehung* of psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* speak to adults too aware of their failures, cynical about the prospects for a "natural" cultural growth and progress, and unsure of how to strike out, let alone in which direction. An education to interpretive and political authority offers not the certainty of ideology (the fear likely behind the opening epigram from Arendt) but a set of practices designed to make uncertainty tractable if not mundane.

At this point we can begin to understand how Freud and Foucault's speech tells us something further about political engagement. In our concern – a well-placed concern, given the history of the twentieth century – to protect the vulnerable, we misconstrue the dynamics of asymmetrical relationships of power. In part because of our debt first to Kant's model binding guardians and the immature, in part because of the subsequent association of nineteenth century maturity models with narratives written with and against *Bildung*, we have come to place the experience and analytic designation of vulnerability on the immature. We have come to map a set of risks, necessities, and vulnerabilities entirely onto one half of a relationship that ought be construed as dynamic. As a result, we have lost sight of the risks and vulnerabilities that would trouble those who govern, just as much as the governed. And so we have lost insight into the situational dynamics that make governance itself so difficult. The governed, alive to the possibility for authoritative missteps, come to think not that they "don't want to be governed so much or in this way." They

the squirrel's heartbeat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence." Thanks to Criscillia Benford for calling it to my attention.

[19] René Char pens the phrase "children without clarity" in his poem "Homage and Famine," from the 1948 collection *Furor and Mystery* now found in *Selected Poems by Rene Char*, ed. and trans. Mary Ann Caws (New York: New Directions, 1992), p. 25. The final parenthetical comment reads: "(It was night. We were huddled under the great oak of tears. The cricket chirped. How did he know, solitary, that the earth was not to die, that we, children without clarity, were soon to speak?)."

come to think that they do not know *how* to govern – that governance is a function of truth in knowledge or mastery of desire. That is, they seek stable ground – vision, so to speak – as a precondition to their engagement in politics and so … they hesitate. If political change is not to wait for some world-shattering, exogenous shock, then we will need to learn once more how to govern: how to author new actions, authorize new forms of governance, and finally, to find in politics the authority we find most clearly in personal relationships.

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# Index


Abu Ghraib prison scandal, 278
academia
  frame-breaking and role of, 281
  Freud's influence in, 51–52n5, 55–61
  as public audience, 245–50
acting out, in enactments, 107–08n48, 107–08
adaptation
  ethics of self-governance and, 205–06
  legibility and, 210–11
  psychoanalysis and, 91–92
aesthetics, political theory and, 13–14
African Americans, American politics and, 278, 278n67
agency
  affect and, 103–05
  authority and, 18–19
  authorship and, 138–39
  enactments in analytic encounters and, 120–21
  Foucault on limits of, 165, 176–80
  narratives of failure and, 97–109
  personal *vs.* cultural authority and, 99
  subjectivity and, 97–99
Aichhorn, August, 211
*Alcibiades* (Plato), 146–47, 198–99
Allen, Amy, 42n85, 180n7
American politics, 278n67
  elite mediation in, 276–81
  interpretive frameworks in, 276–78, 289–90
"Analysis Terminable or Interminable" (Freud), 65–66
analytic competence, 77n88
analytic encounters. *See also* clinical practice
  analyst's authority in, 85n109
  authorship and enactments and, 119–26
  disruptions in, 63–64, 65–66, 71, 74–75
  Dora case history, 78–86
  enactments in, 72–73
  intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 66–70
  narrative tension concerning, 215
  participant-observer perspective in, 96
  patient-analyst relationship in, 80n93
  transference in, 95–96
  truth-telling and trust in, 87
  wanting, doing, and consequences in, 76–78, 77n87
analytic listening, 76–78, 77n88
"analytic third" in psychoanalysis, 210n8
ancient Classics
  Foucault's *parrhesia* and discussion of, 141–50, 144n26, 145n29, 156n64, 165–66, 190–94
  Foucault's return to, 203–04
  Kant compared with, 177–79
  *phusiologia* of Foucault and, 233–37
  self-formation models from, 198–99
*Anti-Oedipus, The* (Deleuze and Guattari), 11–12, 89–90, 185–86, 197–98
*Apology* (Plato), 198–99
archives
  analytic fragments as, 82–83
  Foucault's concept of, 258–59, 265

Arendt, Hannah
on authority, 3–6, 23–26
on education, 289
Freud critiqued by, 9n10
on human relations, 9–10, 10n11, 25n57
on intermediate space, 18n27
Markell on, 208
on persuasion and authority, 28–29
on resistance, 3n3, 7
on selfhood, 9–10, 43–44
speech activities and work of, 39–41
transition to power from authority and, 26–27
on vulnerability and authority, 31–32
Zerilli's work and influence of, 104n34
Aristotle
ethics of, 191
Foucault's discussion of, 175n119, 234n69
on friendship, 36n78
good life concept of, 98n11
politics of, 304n17
tragedy defined by, 107–08
Aron, Lewis, 57–59
on enactments, 106n44, 107–08n48, 107–08
"arts of living"
crisis of authority and, 33
human relationships and, 33–34
Asad, Talal, 63n46, 297–98
*askesis*
community and, 45–47
image-acts and, 241–42
psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* and, 208, 297–98
in public space, 209–10
self-formation and, 43–44, 45–47
truth-telling and, 44
aspect-dawning, Norval's discussion of, 100–01, 101n22
assertion, truth-telling linked to, 87–92
asylums for mental illness, 65n53
Freud's clinical practices as alternative to, 222–23n41, 222–23
asymmetrical relationships
authority and, 7–10, 28, 31–32
educative model of, 36–37
ethics of *parrhesia* and, 153–57
obedience and command and, 32
*parrhesia* and, 209–10
psychoanalysis and, 49–53, 209–10
*Athens in Paris* (Leonard), 144
*Attack of the Blob, The* (Pitkin), 10n11
*auctor,* formative relationships and, 54–56
*auctoritas maiorum,* 23–26, 25n57
audience. *See also* public audience
common judgment of, 233–37
ethopoetic action and, 240
Foucault on engagement of, 157–59
frame-breaking and role of, 270–71
Freud on dilemma of, 221
narrative authority of psychoanalyst and, 211–25
"off to the side," 47–48, 90–91, 137–38, 206, 208, 270–71, 274, 298–99
for politics, 229, 232
psychoanalysis and role of, 87–92
for psychoanalysis *vs. parrhesia,* 207–11
speech-activities and, 37–43
*Ausgang,* Kant's concept of, 179n5
*autarkeia* (self-sufficiency), 241
authorial agency. *See* agency
authority
of analysts, 85n109
Arendt's discussion of, 3–6
of audiences, 233–37, 275–76
authorization and, 137–38, 253–58
authorship and, 18–26, 137–41
childhood experiences with, 32–33
in clinical encounters, 63–64
conceptual transition to power from, 26–33
contemporary critiques of, x, 2n2, 30–33
control and composition of, 285–88
crisis of, 16–18, 212–13
definitions of, 1–10
democratization of, 290–91
in Dora case history, 78–86
ethopoetic action and, 240
family political authority and, 53n9, 127–28, 128n99
Foucault's ethics and limits of, 135–36, 153–57, 176–80
frame-breaking and, 268–70
in Freud's clinical practices, 295–96
gender practices and, 53n9
information technology and mediation of, 284–85
liberation theory and, 55–61
liberty and, 19–22, 135–36
narrative authority of psychoanalyst, 211–25

order and, 22–23
in politics, 250–52
power and, 2–3
practices of, 10–18
processes of, 47–48
psychoanalysis as challenge to, 49–53
psychological dynamics of relations to, 49–92
reason and, 273–74
speech-activities and scenes of address and, 37–43
therapeutic action to narrative transition and, 70–76
vulnerability in relation to, 31–32
*Authority, Nomos I,* 1n1, 29–30n68. *See also Nomos*
authorization
authority and authorship and, 137–38, 253–58
Butler on, 289
clinical encounter and, 220–21
contemporary politics and, 43–48
democratic theory and, 18–19, 289–90
Diogenes's refusal of, 240
facts and, 236
frame-breaking and, 268–70
governance and, 251
*parrhesia* and, 163, 175, 242
political authorization, 87–92, 209–10
postwar context for, 4–5
power and, 2–3
psychoanalysis and, 72–73, 224
public audience and, 40, 225, 232
self-formation and, 37
authorship
audience and, 273–74
authority and, 18–26, 137–41, 290–91
authorization and, 137–38, 253–58
in case histories, 218–19n29
in clinical encounters, 63–64
enactments and, 119–26
Foucault's discussion of, 148–49, 176–80
frame-breaking and, 268–70
media role in, 283
metaphor and, 116–17
public audience and, 227–28

Barthes, Roland, 137–38, 215, 215n16, 302n15
Bartsch, Shadi, 142–45
Bauer, Ida. *See* Dora case history
Beck, Ulrich, 127, 128–29
Benhabib, Seyla, 37–38
Benjamin, Jessica, 59n32, 62–63n44, 79n92, 82–83, 93
on analytic impartiality, 106n44
on Freud, 111–12, 123
on psychoanalytic model, 207
Berlin, Ira, 278n67
Bersani, Leo, 81, 208, 236–37
*Between Past and Future* (Arendt), 3n3, 3–6, 7, 43n86, 43–44
*Bildung*
childhood and, 62n42
*phusiologia* of Foucault and, 234
political implications of, 54n11
politics and, 304–06
Binswanger, Ludwig, 12–13
*bios,* 191, 192, 198–99
*Birth of the Clinic* (Foucault), 165, 246, 254
Bouveresse, Jacques, 100n19
Brooks, Peter, 217, 220–21, 262n21, 302n15
Brown, Wendy
on failure of political action, 220–21
on freedom, 53–54, 60n36, 221–22
on individual *vs.* social responsibility, 276–78
on politicized identity, 27–28, 121–22, 274
on power and authority, 31–32, 253
*Brown v. Board of Education,* 282–83
Brunswick, Ruth Mack, 216–17
Butler, Judith, 25–26, 31–32, 57–59, 94–96
on agency and subjectivity, 97–99, 100, 105
on asymmetry and persecution, 99n13
on attachment to subjection, 110
on audience and authorship, 276–78
on authorization, 289
on authorship and enactments, 94n3, 94–95, 119–26
on *conatus* (desire for existence), 98n12
on desire and agency, 121–22
on ethics and human relationships, 35–36
Foucault and, 274n54
on frame-breaking, 268–70, 271–72
on Freud, 121n83
on politics, 255–56, 275–76
on sexuality, 102–03

Butler, Judith (*cont.*)
on Spinoza, 98n12
on substitution, 123–24
on universality, 263–64n29
Zerilli's critique of, 103n31, 103–05

Cambridge school, 44–45
Campbell, Kirsten, 98n10
Canguilhem, Georges, 181–83
capitalism, crisis of authority and, 16–18
care, Foucault's *parrhesia* and relationship of, 159–61, 161n77, 197n47
case histories
audience for, 221, 228
contemporary analysis and, 213n12
discursivity in, 222–25
enactments in, 105–08
of Freud, 65–66, 83–84
literary interpretations and, 216–17, 302n15
narrative authority of psychoanalyst and, 78–86, 211–25
public presentations of, 212n10
resistance strategies in, 217–19, 262n21
science in, 216–17
writing challenges in, 218–19n29
catachresis
politics and, 257–58
rhetorical strategy of, 206
Cavell, Stanley, xn1, 94n3, 143n23, 161n77, 162–63, 168, 168–69n101, 301–02
change, psychic perspective of, 93–96
Char, René, 3n3, 3–6, 305n19
childhood
development in, 115–19, 116n72
drive theory and role of, 60n36
ethics and, 54n12
Foucault's discussion of, 168
Freud on judgment in, 84n108
psychoanalysis and role of, 51–53, 61–63
reality-testing process in Freud's discussion of, 113–16
repetition of events in, 123
role of play in, 123–24
"Child is Being Beaten, A" (Brown), 220–21
Chodorow, Nancy, 51–52n5, 64n49
object-relations theory and, 60n36
psychoanalysis and, 51–52n5, 55–61
recursive relativity of, 271
relational psychoanalysis and, 57n27, 58n29, 58n30, 59n32, 60n36
on resistance and transference, 64n49
choice
humanism and, 180–87
political action and, 201–02
Chriss, James, 27–28
Christianity, Foucault's discussion of, 186–87n29, 255n5
Chused, Judith, 106n44
citizenship
authority and, 19–22
dyadic constitution of, 281–82
education for, 282–83
*parrhesia* and, 172n112
public spectacle and creation of, 226
*Civilization and its Discontents* (Freud), 11–12, 60n35
Butler's discussion of, 121n83
liberal politics in, 131–32
reaction-formation in, 102–03
civil rights movement, 278n67, 282–83, 283n75
Cixous, Hélène, 78–79n91
Clark University, 55n17, 55n18, 55–61
clinical practice. *See also* analytic encounters
discursivity and authorization in, 222–25
Dora case history, 78–86
enactments in, 72–73
intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 66–70
*parrhesia* and, 148–49, 149n44
wanting, doing, and consequences in, 76–78
coercion, power and, 31–32
coherence, power and authority and, 30–33
Cohn, Dorrit, 83
Coles, Romand, 186n28
collective figuration
identity formation and, 119–26
*parrhesia* and, 163
politics and, 264–65
resistance and, 103–05
collective practices, *parrhesia* and, 200–01
collectivity, agency and, 103–05
Collège de France, Foucault's tenure at, 11n12, 14, 16, 138–39, 150, 245–46, 276n61
Columbia University, 55–61

combative collaboration
in Dora case history, 78–86
Freud's development of, 51–53, 133
*parrhesia* compared with, 133–37
politics and, 292–93
therapeutic action to narrative and, 70–76
wanting, doing, and consequences in, 76–78, 77n87
command, asymmetric relationships and, 32
Communist Party of France (PCF), 181
community
authority and, 19–22
Foucault's *parrhesia* and limits of, 201–02
interpretive space of, 231
political theory and role of, 7–10
psychoanalysis in relation to, 296
public audience and, 227
Conant, James, 90n122, 102n25, 166–68
*conatus* (desire for existence), 98n12
Confederate flag, identity politics and, 278
confessional technology
authority and, 75–76
*parrhesia* and models of, 133–37, 159–61, 192
power relations and, 133–34
prehistory of, 194–96
psychoanalysis as, 51–53, 64–65
*Conflict of the Faculties* (Kant), 177–78n2, 177–79, 242
Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), 282–83
*connaissances,* Foucault's discussion of, 233
Connolly, William, 28–29, 30–31, 37–38, 186–87n29
consensus
*parrhesia* and pressure for, 205
truth *vs.,* 243–45
"Constructions of Analysis" (Freud), 65–66
containing space of psychoanalytic theory, 64–78
Dora case history and, 78–86
intermediate space, 66–70
from therapeutic action to narrative in, 70–76
wanting, doing, and consequences in, 76–78
contemporary psychoanalysis, case histories and, 213n12
contest, Foucault on dynamic of, 157–59
*Contest of the Faculties* (Kan5), 164–65, 250
"Conversations with an Impartial Person" (Freud), 221
counter-publics, politics and, 292
counter-transference
of Freud, 120
in Freud's psychoanalysis, 86
*Courage of the Truth, The* (Foucault), 11n12
Crews, Fred, 81
critical theory
authority and, 21–22
contemporary politics and, 44–45
metaphor in, 286–87
politics and, 291–92
Culler, Jonathan, 232, 266–68, 302n15
culture
authority and, 300–04
dyadic relationships and, 33–34
Freud on politics and, 11–12
*phusiologia* of Foucault and, 233–37
politics and, 264–65, 292–93
psychoanalytic theory and, 14n21, 61–63, 207–11, 261n20
curiosity, Foucault's ethics of self-governance and, 188–90
Cushman, Philip, 57n26
Cusset, François, 59n31
Cynicism
Diogenes and, 238
Foucault's focus on, 16, 241n94, 255n5
*parrhesia* and, 158
self-sufficiency and, 241–42

*Daily Californian,* Foucault interview in, 168
Davidson, Arnold, 13n19, 44, 143n22, 143n23
on Foucault, 135
death drive, Freud's discussion of, 110–11
Decker, Hannah S., 78–79n91
Deleuze, Gilles, 11–12, 56n22, 59n34, 185–86, 192, 197–98
democratic theory
authority and, 28, 32–33, 45, 50–51
authorization and, 18–19
dyadic relationships in, 281–82
Foucault's *parrhesia* and, 153–57
mass politics and, 289–90
perfectionist tradition of, 94–95

democratic theory (*cont.*)
public audience and, 228
public space in, 209–10
risk in liberal political institutions and, 170–75
dependency
American politics and relations of, 278–81
asymmetrical relationships and, 209–10
ethopoetic action and, 241
self-formation and, 130–32
Derrida, Jacques, 144
Foucault and, 145n29
desire
development from infancy to adulthood and, 115n70, 115–19
Foucault's ethics concerning, 134–37, 185–86, 294n5
Lacan's writing about, 56n22, 60–61, 98n11, 294n5
political change and, 294
relentlessness of, 98n11, 98–99
development, desire and, 115n70, 115–19
Diogenes
choice and action and, 201–02
combative collaboration and, 133
ethopoetic action and, 237–45
in Foucault's writing, 141–42
modern politics and, 186–87n29, 255–56
*parrhesia* and, 155–56
philosophy and, 239n84
self-formation and, 158, 198–99
Dionysius, 145–48, 162
*dire-vrai, parrhesia* as, 139n12
Disch, Lisa, 264–65, 281–82
*Discipline and Punish* (Foucault)
authority *vs.* power discussed in, 26–27
expressive subject in, 194–96
French penal system and, 246–47
history in, 247–48
limits of selfhood in, 165, 176–80
*parrhesia* in context of, 166n94, 169, 203–04, 254
political engagement in, 196–97
public audience in, 225–26
discourse
in Foucault's work, 11n12, 14, 16, 138–39, 225–32
frame-breaking and, 272–73
Freud's clinical practices and, 222–25
mediated exchanges in, 283–84
metaphor in, 287–88
*parrhesia* and, 139–40, 258–59, 266
*discours vrai,* 171n105
disruptions
in academic writing, 246
of analytic encounters, 215
Arendt's discussion of, 25–26
Butler's discussion of, 35–36, 110
in childhood, 123–24
combative collaborations model and, 51–53
drive theory and, 100–01
in Freud's case histories, 209–10, 219–20
Freud's surfeit of energies and, 112–13
*parrhesia and,* 133, 153–54, 255–56
of political order, 18–19
of power, 30–33
psychic change and, 105–08, 111–12, 131–32
in psychoanalysis, 63–64, 65–66, 71, 74–75, 108–09
public audiences and, 47–48
repetitions of play and, 124–25
risk in political institutions of, 170–75
substitution as framework for, 123
in trauma, 95
doctor-patient relationship
authority in, 49–53, 63–64
intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 66–70
Dora case history, 65–66, 78–79n91, 78–86, 79n92, 80n94, 86n113
frame-breaking in, 270–71
gender issues in, 120, 223–24
literary theory and interpretations of, 266–68
objectification in, 217–19
*Dream and Existence* (Binswanger), 12–13
Dreyfus, Hubert, 182n11
drive theory
enactments and, 105–08
Lacan and, 60n35, 60n36, 60–61, 61n39
psychic change and, 100–08
self-formation and, 103–05
dyadic relationships
authority and, 62–63n44
of citizens, 281–82
culture and, 33–34

École Normale Supérieure, 181
education. *See also Nacherziehung* (after/second education)
  Arendt on, 289
  asymmetric relationships and, 36–37
  authority and, 19–22, 300–04
  disposition to steadiness and, 192
  Foucault's discussion of, 147–48
  frame-breaking and, 281
  Freud's comments on, 84n107, 125–26
  liberty and authority in, 72–73
  nature and culture and, 102–03n28
  *parrhesia* model of, 36, 133–37, 177, 186–87
  *phusiologia* of Foucault and, 233–37
  psychoanalytic relationship and, 77n87
  public audience and, 251, 300–04
ego
  enactments and negotiations of, 105–08
  Freud's discussion of, 104n36, 105n39, 105–08
Eliot, George, 304–05n18
elites
  mediation of political engagement by, 257
  public audiences and, 273–85
Ellman, Stephen, 71
enactments
  analytic impartiality in, 106n44
  authorship and, 119–26
  in clinical encounters, 72–73, 74n84, 295
  *parrhesia* and, 259–61
  play compared with, 120–21, 123
  politics of, 73–74
  psychoanalytic concepts in, 105–08, 107–08n48
  relational psychology and, 108–09
  terminology of, 73n82
  transference and, 95–96
Enlightenment
  Foucault's criticism of, 250
  Foucault's humanism and, 181–83
Epictetus, 141–42, 165–66, 230, 238, 304n17
Epicurus, 173n113, 228, 235, 254n2
epistemology
  authority and, 30–31
  grammar of, expressive subjectivity and, 179, 179n5
*Epistle* (Horace), 177–79, 178n3
*épreuve de vie* (testing of life), Foucault's self-governance and, 191
*ergon*
  in ancient philosophy, 144
  Foucault's discussion of, 147–48
  *parrhesia* and, 155–56
*eros*
  as creation, 102–03n28
  Foucault's discussion of, 146–47, 147n35, 254, 254n2
*Eros and Civilization* (Marcuse), 11–12
*Erziehung,* childhood and, 62n42
*Escape from Authority* (Schaar), 53n8
*Escape from Liberty* (Fromm), 53n8
ethics
  in analytic encounters, 87
  Butler's discussion of, 35–36
  combative collaboration and, 74–75
  disposition to steadiness and, 190–94
  expressive subject and, 194–96
  maturity metaphors and, 54n12
  *parrhesia* and, 134–37, 151–64, 232
  political self-governance and, 204–05
  power and, 3–6
  of psychoanalysis, 108–09
  psychoanalytic technique and, 14–16
  psychoanalytic *vs.* parrhesiastic models of, 207–11
  of self-governance, 153–57, 187–96
  subjectivity and, 184–86
  truth-telling and, 163
ethopoetic action
  Diogenes and, 237–45
  *parrhesia* and, 235–36
Euben, Peter, 146, 202–03, 206
Euripides, 146–47, 154–55
Ewald, François, 128–29, 174n117
excess, Freud's discussion of, 112–13
exemplarity, authority and, 16–18
existentialism, Foucault and, 181, 184–86, 192, 203n68
expressive subjectivity, 178–80
  *parrhesia* and, 194–96

facticity, 184–85
failure, narratives of
  politics and, 297
  subjectivity and, 97–109
families, political authority in, 127–28, 128n99
"fearless speech." *See parrhesia*

Felman, Shoshana, 51n4, 95–96, 224n47
on agency and subjectivity, 105
on authorship and enactments, 119–26
on psychic change, 112–13
on sexuality, 102–03
on subjectivity, 97–100
trauma studies of, 88n116, 224
feminist theory
authorship and enactments in, 119–26
influence of psychoanalysis in, 55–61
kinship relations in, 98n10
psychoanalysis and, 82n99
Ferenczi, Sándor, 67n60
fifth pillar proposals, 173–74n115
Firestone, Shulamith, 56–59
Flathman, Richard, 30–31
Fliess, Wilhelm, 86
formative relationships, *Nacherziehung* (after/second education) and, 53–64
Foucault, Michel. *See also parrhesia*
on academia, 245–50, 282–83
ancient Classics as source for, 141–50, 255n5, 294n5
Arendt and, 9n10
audience for, 207–11
on authority, 2, 8–9, 22–23, 25n57, 137–41, 253–58
on authorship, 18–26, 137–41
Butler's work and, 35–36
on care and *parrhesia,* 159–61
on Char, 3n3
on commonality of judgment, 233–37
critical assessment of, 142–45, 202–03, 246–47
critical theory and work of, 21–22
on discourse, 139–40, 222–23, 258–59, 266
educative model of *parrhesia* and, 133–37
on ethical practices of *parrhesia,* 151–64
on ethics, 40–41
ethics of self-governance and, 153–57, 187–96
on ethopoetic action, 237–45
on expressive subjectivity, 188, 194–96
on frame-breaking, 271–72, 274
Freud compared with, 27–28, 133–37
on friendship, 36n78
on governance, 1n1, 16, 22–23, 30–33, 241n94
on intermediate space, 18n27
on interpretive authority in politics, 250–52, 286–87
interpretive frameworks and work of, xi–xiii
on Kant, 40, 177–79, 179n5
on knowledge and power, 285–86
Lacan and, 59n34, 61n38
on liberalism, 293–94
liberalism critiqued by, 64n50
on liberty, 117–18n77
literary and aesthetic works of, 13–14
on medicalization of mental illness, 52n7
on modernity, 34n75
narrative theory and, 302n15
Nietzsche and, 259–61
on nonidentity, 274, 274n54
*parrhesia* of, 2, 10–18, 16n25, 42
power and authority, 26–27
on power and politics, ix, xii
practical attunement concept and work of, 25–26
psychagogues and work of, 164–69
on psychic change, 110
psychoanalysis critiqued by, 12–13, 13n17, 57–59, 64–65, 89–90, 90n118, 185–86, 262–63
public audience concept of, 225–32
on relationships, 292–93
on rhetorical strategy in politics, 263
risk in liberal political institutions and, 170–75
on self-governance and political engagement, 196–202
selfhood practices and, 6n8, 45–47, 108–09
speaker as *parrhesiastes* sought by, 153–57
on subjectivity, 177–79, 183, 290–91, 296–97
on tragedy, 254
on truth-teller, 157–59, 302–03
Wittgenstein compared with, 101
"Fragment of an Analysis, A" (Freud), 86
frame-breaking
in American politics, 278–81
elite mediation of engagement and, 273–85
information technology and, 284–85
literary theory and, 266–73
media and, 283
*parrhesia* and, 288

in politics, 268–73
theoretical origins of, 267–68n40
France
Foucault's discussion of politics in, 173–75
Freudian psychoanalysis in, 55–61, 56n22
postwar philosophy in, 59n31
*Frankenstein* (Shelley), 266–68
Frankfurt School, 5–6
freedom
authority and, 3–6, 53–54
self-formation and, 130–32
*Freedom and Resentment and other Essays* (Strawson), 53n8
French Resistance
Arendt on, 3n3, 3–6, 40
post-war philosophy and, 181
French Revolution, Kant's discussion of, 242
French theory of psychoanalysis, 57–59
Freud, Anna, 216–17, 218–19
Freud, Sigmund
academic influence of, 55–61
on analytic relationship, 70–76, 233
Arendt's critique of, 9n10
on audience role, 207–11, 276
on authority, 2, 8–9, 127–28, 253–58
Brown's discussion of, 220–21
Butler's discussion of, 121n83
case histories of, 65–66, 78–86, 209–10, 212n10
clinical practices of, 2, 13n18, 13–16, 14n21, 15n24, 65–66, 222–23n41
on combative collaboration, 133, 292–93
on dependency and political agency, 130–32
discursivity and clinical practices of, 222–23
Dora case history of, 78–86
drive theory and, 60n35
on ethics, 40–41
Foucault and, 27–28, 133–37, 173–75, 189–90, 203, 228–29, 260n17
on friendship, 36n78
on institutionalization of identity, xii
on intermediate space, 18n27, 66–70
intolerance of disagreement by, 55n15
legal challenges to work of, 49–53
on legal status of psychoanalysis, 49–53
on medicalization of psychoanalysis, 72n78
on narrative authority of psychoanalyst, 211–25
narrative capacity for, 302–03
Nietzsche and, 259–61
political marginalization of, 131, 131n102
on power and politics, ix, 266
practical attunement concept and work of, 25–26
psychic change and work of, 100–08
psychoanalytic theory of, 10–18, 15n24, 190
relational theory and, 49n1
selfhood practices and, 46–47, 189
on sexuality, 102–03n28, 102–03
therapeutics of self and, 89–90
on third party in psychoanalysis, 87–92
on transference, 80n95
on *Weltanschauung* in psychoanalysis, 117–18n77
Frey, William, 278n67
Friedrich, Carl, 4n6, 27n62, 29–30n68, 273–74
friendship, Foucault's discussion of, 146–47, 147n36
Fromm, Erich, 53n8
Furet, François, 226
*Future of an Illusion* (Freud), 11–12

Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 300–01, 303
Galen, 141–42, 165–66
Gallop, Jane, 81, 82n99, 82–83
Gardiner, Muriel, 216–17
Gellner, Ernest, 131–32
gender
in analytic encounters, 120, 223–24
*askesis* and role of, 45–47
authority and, 53n9
Butler's discussion of, 103n31, 263–64n29
Chodorow's discussion of, 64n49
colonialism and, 26n59
dyadic relationships and, 35–36
enactments in analytic encounters and norms of, 120
marriage relationships and, 161n77
personal identity and, 102–03, 274
psychoanalysis and role of, 102n26
*Gender Trouble* (Butler), 35–36

*Genealogy of Morals* (Nietzsche), 189–90
Genette, Gérard
  on authorization, 40, 137–38
  on discourse, 38–39
  on ethics, 40–41, 45–46n89
  on historical interpretation, 206
  on literary theory, 266–68
  on narrative, 301–02, 302n15
  *parrhesia* and, 208
  on play and enactment, 123
German Romanticism, Freud and, 110–11
Geuss, Raymond, 30–31
*Giving an Account of Oneself* (Butler), 35–36, 97–98
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 110–11, 211
Goldman, Harvey, 13n19
Goldstein, Jan, 65n53, 127n96, 149n44, 213n12
*Gorgias* (Plato), 146–48, 150, 157–59
governance
  authority and, 18–26
  disposition to steadiness and, 190–94
  ethical self-governance, Foucault's discussion of, 153–57, 187–96
  ethical *vs.* political governance, *parrhesia* and, 204–05
  ethopoetic action and, 241
  expressive subject, 194–96
  Foucault's analysis of, 1n1, 16, 22–23, 30–33, 135–36, 150, 166–68
  liberty and authority in, 72–73
  limits of, 304–06
  *parrhesia* and, 136–37, 177
  political engagement and, 196–202, 294
  testing of truth-telling through *parrhesia* and, 157–59
*Government of Self and Others* (Foucault), 11n12, 137–38, 154–55, 158, 179n5
Greenberg, Jay, 106n44
Guattari, Felix, 11–12, 185–86, 192, 197–98
guilt, Freud's discussion of, 102–03, 103n29

Habermas, Jürgen, 1n1, 37–38, 42n85, 117, 179–80, 255–56
Hadot, Pierre, 13n19, 33, 44, 45–46
  on Foucault, 135, 144, 144n26, 156n64, 161–64
Hale, Nathan, 55n19, 55–61
Hardt, Michael, 142n20, 255n5
Harvard University, 55–61
Hegel, G. F. W.
  Butler and, 26
  Foucault's work and, 137–38
Heidegger, Martin, 302–03
Herbst, Susan, 283
*Herculine Barbin dite Alexina B,* 274n54
hermeneutic analysis, 79n92
*Hermeneutics of the Subject* (Foucault), 228, 253
hierarchy
  educative model and, 36
  of meaning and silence, Foucault's *parrhesia* and, 140
  political relations of, 26–33
historical fiction
  truth-telling and, 246–47
historical fictions, Foucault's method of, 146, 246–47, 248–49, 261–62, 276, 287–88
history
  Arendt on story-telling and, 25
  in case histories, 219–20
  Foucault's discussion of, 247–48
  juridicalization of, 268–70
  meaning in context of, 261–62
  modernity and, 44–45
  *parrhesia* and interpretations of, 206
*History of Madness, The* (Foucault), 12–13
*History of Sexuality* (Foucault)
  French resistance discussed in, 3n3
  limits of selfhood in, 165, 176–80
  *parrhesia* in, 159n72, 203–04
  political engagement in, 196–97
  psychoanalysis critiqued in, 12–13, 57–59, 89–90, 185–86
  self formation in, 135–36
  tragedy and metaphor in, 254
Hobbes, Thomas, 19n32, 251–52
Hochschild, Arlie, 51–52n5, 55–61
*homo ludens,* Freud's concept of, 94–95
*homonoia* (alikeness), 234–35
Honig, Bonnie, 37–38
Hooke, Alexander, 182n10
Horace, 178n3
  Foucault's discussion of, 177–79
Huffer, Lynn, 147n36
*Human Condition, The* (Arendt), 9–10

humanism
  authorization and, 290–91
  Foucault on choice and, 180–87, 182n10
human relationships. *See* relationships
hysteria, research history concerning, 126–30, 127n96

id, Freud's discussion of, 104n36, 105–08, 189–90
identity politics
  American politics as, 278–81
  political theory and, 9–10
"idio-polis," 73n83
  in clinical encounters, 72–73, 76–78
  metaphor and, 117
*Iliad* (Homer), 177–79
image-acts
  *parrhesia* and, 241–42
  politics and, 255–56
*Immortality* (Kundera), 266–68
impartiality in psychoanalysis, 105–08, 106n44
in-between space. *See* intermediate space
independence, asymmetrical relationships and, 209–10
individualization
  expressive subjectivity and, 178–80
  Freud and Foucault on, 291
  modernity and, 126–30
inequality, crisis of authority and, 33
instincts, Freud's discussion of, 103–08, 104n36
institutions
  Foucault's dismissal of, 153–57
  media as, 283
  political change and, 293–94
  political organization through, 282–83
insurance theory, 174n117
intellectual, Foucault on role of, 249n112
intermediate space
  analytic encounters and, 66–70
  Arendt's in-between space as, 18n27
  breaking the frame of self in, 109–19
  frame-breaking of politics and, 271
  individualization in, 128–29
  language of, 18n27, 87–92
  *of parrhesia,* 89, 153–57, 202–06, 263
  politics and, 292–93
  transference and, 67n62, 68–69n68
  of trust and truth-telling, 16–18, 18n27
interpersonal psychoanalysis, 57–59
interpersonal relationships. *See* relationships
interpretive authority, in politics, 250–52
  frame-breaking and, 268–70
interpretive desire, mastery of, 115–19
interpretive resistance, narrative authority of psychoanalysis and, 221–22
"Introduction into Politics" (Arendt), 39–41
*Introductory Lectures* (Freud), 121n83
iterability, frame-breaking and, 268–70

*J'accuse* (Zola), 181
Jacobs, Theodore, 105–08
Jones, Van, 284–85
journalism, Foucault on, 287–88
judgment
  common judgment of, 233–37
  ethopoetic action and, 237–45
  Foucault's *parrhesia* and, 193–94
  frame-breaking and, 281
  Freud's discussion of, 94–95
  listening as basis for, 231
Jung, Carl, 55n15

Kant, Immanuel
  *Aufklärung,* 135n6, 244n100
  on authority, 19–22
  on critical and political enlightenment, 19n32, 44–45, 243–45, 304–06
  educative model and work of, 20n35, 21n36, 36, 177–78n2
  epistemological grammar and, 179n5
  Foucault's discussion of, 40, 166–68, 177–79, 179n5, 186–87, 196–97, 242, 244n100, 258–59
  on individuals and state, 27–28, 243
  Nietzsche and, 167n97
  on politics and pedagogy, 72n80
  psychagogue and work of, 164–69
  on religion and knowledge, 250
  response to Frederick William II, 177–78n2
Katznelson, Ira, 22n42
Klein, Melanie, 58n29
knowledge
  *connaissances,* 233
  Foucault's discussion of, 225–32
  of *phusiologia,* 233–37
Kofman, Sarah, 77n89
Kohut, Heinz, 57n26

Kristeva, Julia, 9n10
Kundera, Milan, 266–68

Lacan, Jacques
  on drive theory, 57–59, 59n34, 60n37, 60–61, 61n39
  Foucault and, 61n38, 144, 145n29
*Laches* (Plato), 146–47, 198–99
Laing, R. D., 52n7
Lane, Christopher, 59n34
language games, contextual knowledge, 74n85
Laplanche, Jacques, 35–36
Lasch, Christopher, 7n9
*Las Meninas* (painting), 254
Laub, Dori, 224n47
law, authority relationship in, challenges to, 49–53
Lear, Jonathan, 60n35, 73n83, 105–08
  on analytic impartiality, 106n44
  on Aristotle, 98n11
  on desire, 98n11
  on drive theory, 271n48, 271–72
  on Freud, 111–12
  idio-polis concept of, 73n83, 117
  Lacan and, 59n32
  mental restlessness concept of, 105n42
  on play in childhood, 123–24n90, 123–24
  on psychoanalysis, 117–18n77
legal theory
  challenges to Freud's psychoanalysis, 49–53
  frame-breaking in, 268–70
  psychoanalytic theory and, 14n21
  vulnerability and, 298–99
legibility
  absence of narrative authority and, 214–15
  "analytic third" in psychoanalysis and, 210n8
  narrative authority of psychoanalysis and, 221–22
  psychoanalysis and, 210–11
*Legitimacy and the Modern State* (Schaar), 53n8, 53n9, 53–54
Lenin, Vladimir, 164
Léonard, Jacques, 286–87
Leonard, Miriam, 144, 145n29
Leroux, Nanette, 149n44
*Les guérillères* (Wittig), 264–65
*Les Temps Modernes,* 181
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 221–22
*lexis,* Foucault's concept of, 227–28, 231
liberalism
  authority and, 19–22
  Freud's critique of, 131–32
  *parrhesia* and risk in, 170–75, 203
  paternalism and authority in, 127–28, 128n99
  political change and, 293–94
  political power and, 27–28
  psychoanalysis and *parrhesia* and, 292–93
liberation theory
  Freud's influence on, 56–59
  object relations theory and, 57n26
  philosophical tradition concerning, 7n9
liberty, authority and, 19–22, 135–36, 257–58
listening
  by audiences, 228–29
  Foucault on *parrhesia* and, 228
  interpretive framing for, 231
  *parrhesia* and, 287
  self-discipline intrinsic to, 230
literary competences
  Foucault's discussion of, 228, 232, 246
literary theory
  audience and, 275n59
  case history interpretations and, 216–17, 302n15
  politics and, 266–73, 276–78
Little Hans case history, 65–66, 83–84
Lloyd, Moya, 98n12
Locke, John
  on authority, 19–22
  on governance, 20n33, 20n34
  on political origins, 19n32
Loewald, Hans, 69–70, 105–08
  on analytic competence, 77n88
  on drive theory, 57–59, 59n33, 60n35
  on play, 115, 117, 123
  on psychoanalysis, 117–18n77
  on self-narration, 118–19
*logon, parrhesia* and, 155–56
*logos*
  in ancient philosophy, 144
  ethics of self-governance and, 191
  Foucault's discussion of, 147–48
  listening and, 231
  self-formation and, 198–99

Long, Anthony, 142–45
*L'Ordre du discours* (Foucault), 138–40
love, analytic relationship and, 71
Luhrmann, Tanya, 52n7

*Madness and Civilization* (Foucault), 181–83, 228–29
Malkki, Liisa, 54n12
Manning, Philip, 55n16
Mansbridge, Jane, 281–82
Marcus, Steven, 79n92
Marcuse, Herbert, 11–12, 56–59, 60n36
Markell, Patchen, 23–26, 24n51, 208
Markovits, Elizabeth, 38n80, 142–45
Marx, Karl, 17, 27–28
  Foucault's work and, 137–38
Massey, David, 81
*matière bios* (life material), Foucault's concept of, 189–90
*Maturity and Modernity* (Owen), 179n5
McClure, Kirstie, 228n55
McLaughlin, James, 107–08
meaning
  Barthes's comments on, 215n16
  in Foucault's work, 225–32
  historical context of, 261–62
  limits in ethics and politics of, 304–06
  in psychoanalysis, 207–11
media, politics and, 283
medicine
  adoption of psychoanalysis by, 52n7, 57–59
  authority and, 49–53
  Foucault on discourse in, 200n59, 262–63
metaphor
  authorship and, 116–17
  discourse and, 287–88
  Foucault's turn to, 259–61
  in Nietzsche's work, 259–61
  politics and, 258–66, 303
  stabilization of authority and, 256–57
  theoretical uses of, 286–87
metaphoric competence
  authority and, 203–04, 223n41, 273–74
  education and, 236–37, 240
  frame-breaking and, 272–73, 279–81
  politics and, 257–58, 266
  psychoanalysis and, 251
  self-formation and, 95, 203, 210–11
*Middlemarch* (Eliot), 304–05n18
Mill, John Stuart, 7n9
Miller, Paul Allen, 61n38, 144, 145n29
Mitchell, Stephen, 13n18, 267–68n40
  on analytic impartiality, 106n44
  relational theory and, 49n1, 57–59, 59n33
modernity
  agency and, 99, 121–22
  *akesis* concept and, 46–47
  ancient philosophy in context of, 150
  Arendt's comments on, 3–6
  combative collaboration and, 135–36
  contemporary philosophy's critique of, 17
  Foucault's distancing from, 153–57, 291
  history and, 44–45
  *parrhesia* and, 47–48
  psychoanalysis and, 37–43, 89, 126–30
  representation and, 34n75
  risk and, 126–30
  self formation and, 89–90
Moi, Toril, 78–79n91, 82–83
Monoson, Sara, 142–45, 151–52n51, 154–55, 155n59, 172n111
Montgomery Bus Boycott, 282–83, 283n75
Moretti, Franco, 54n11, 266–68, 302n15
*Moses and Monotheism* (Freud), 11–12

*Nacherziehung* (after/second education)
  authority and, 93–96
  childhood and, 62n42
  combative collaboration and, 75–76
  cultural codes and, 63–64
  in Dora case history, 83
  formative relationships and, 53–64
  Freud's concept of, 25–26, 51–53
  individualization and, 127–28
  intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 66–70
  Nietzsche's philosophy and, 90–91
  *phusiologia* of Foucault and, 234
  politics and ethics and, 292–93
  psychoanalytic technique and, 14–16
  public education compared with, 125–26
  in public sphere, 236–37
  risk preparation and, 130
  self formation and, 61–63
*Nachträglichkeit*, 95–96
*Names of History, The* (Rancière), 2n2

narrative
absence in case histories of, 219–20
authority of psychoanalyst in, 211–25
contemporary theories of, 301–02, 302n15
of failure, subjectivity and, 97–109
literary theories of, 266–73
in psychoanalysis, 108n49, 108–09
self-formation and, 115–19
therapeutic action transition to, 70–76
*Narrative Discourse* (Genette), 38–39
"Negation" (Freud), 84n108
negative statements, Freud's discussion of, 84–85
Nehamas, Alexander, 33
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 7n9, 27–28, 54n11
educative model and work of, 36
ethics and work of, 161, 207n2
Foucault and, 166–68, 186–87n29, 189–90, 196–97, 202–03, 206, 249n110
Freudian *Nacherziehung* and, 90–91
Kant and, 167n97, 177–79
on metaphors, 285–86
on modernity, 259–61
on morality, 108n50
*ressentiment*, concept of, 35–36, 189, 203
transvalorization of values by, 241–42
"Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" (Foucault), 137–38
"Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (Foucault), 249n110
Nolan, James, 27–28
*Nomos,* 3–6, 273–74
*Nomos: Authority Revisited* (Kloppenberg), 1n1, 17n26
Norval, Aletta, 100–01, 101n22, 101–02n24

obedience, asymmetric relationships and, 32
objectification in case histories, 217–19
object relations therapy, 57–59, 58n29
liberation theory, 57n26
*Odyssey* (Homer), 177–79
"On Beginning the Treatment," 74n85, 80n93
*On Revolution* (Arendt), 3n3, 7
*On Violence* (Arendt), 23–26
order
legitimation of authority and, 29–30
political authority and, 22–23
*Order of Discourse, The* (Foucault), 137–38
*Order of Things, The* (Foucault), 164–65, 196–97, 227, 254
orthopaedy, *parrhesia* and, 176–80
*Outline of a Theory of Psychoanalysis* (Freud), 121n83
Owen, David, 54n11, 135, 179n5, 207n2
on Foucault, 166–68, 168–69n101
neo-Kantianism and, 28n65
on *parrhesia,* 142n20, 161n77, 162–63
Ozouf, Mona, 226

*paideia, phusiologia* of Foucault and, 233–37
paralysis, in modern politics, ix–x
parental relations
authority and, 62–63n44
psychoanalysis and role of, 51–53, 53n8, 61–63
*parrhesia*
adaptation and, 205–06
ancient political thought and evolution of, 141–50, 176–77
audience for, 207–11
authority and ethics of, 10–18, 156–57, 300–04
authorship and, 148–49, 266
contextuality in, 139
curiosity and resolve and, 188–90
as *dire-vrai,* 139n12
discursive practices and, 139–40, 258–59, 266
disposition to steadiness and, 190–94
disruptive qualities of, 255–56
educative model of, 36, 133–37, 186–87, 281–82
ethical practices and, 151–64, 187–96, 204–05, 232
ethopoetic action and, 235–36, 237–45
expressive subjectivity and, 178–80, 194–96
Foucault's discussion of, 2, 16, 16n25
frame-breaking and, 272–73, 288
governance and, 136–37, 177
intermediate space of, 89, 153–57, 202–06, 263
interpretive authority in politics and, 250–52
metaphor and, 287

modern politics and, 186–87n29
political implications of, 148–49, 154–55, 200–01, 229, 249, 253–58, 266–73, 292–93
psychagogue concept and, 164–69
psychoanalysis and, 117–18n77, 140–41
public audience and, 228, 237–45, 300–04
recent scholarship on, 38n80
relationship of care and, 159–61
rhetoric and, 16n25, 142n19
risk in liberal political institutions and, 170–75
self-governance and, 153–57, 187–96
self-governance and political engagement and, 196–202
speech-activities and, 37–43
subjectivity in, 177–79, 183
testing of truth-telling through, 157–59
tragedy and metaphor and, 254
trust and truth-telling in, 149–50, 297
Parsons, Talcott, 51–52n5, 55–61, 57n27
participant-observer perspective, in analytic encounters, 96
Pateman, Carol, 11–12, 56–59
performatives
authority in terms of, 94n3, 100
enactments to authorship and, 119–26
frame-breaking and, 268–70
*parrhesia* and, 158n66
speech-acts and, 42, 158n66
in truth-telling, 133–37
Pericles, 141–42, 154n55, 154–55
personal identity, politics and, 1n1, 1–2
persuasion, authority and, 28–29
*Phaedrus* (Plato), 146–47
Phelan, James, 266–68
*philia,* Foucault's discussion of, 146–47, 147n36, 186–87, 254
Philo of Alexandria, 230
*Philosophic Investigations* (Wittgenstein), 100n18, 103n30
philosophy
Foucault's *parrhesia* and, 142–45, 178n4, 282–83
psychoanalysis and, 100n19
*phusiologia,* 302–03
common judgment and, 233–37
legibility and, 210–11
physical desire, mastery of, 115–19
Pinel, Philippe, 223n42, 223n44, 223–24
*pistis* (trust), 234–35
Pitkin, Hanna, 10n11, 51–52n5, 55–61
Plato
contestatory speech in works of, 157–59
ethical practices of *parrhesia* and, 151–64
Foucault's interpretations of, 133, 141–45, 149–50, 151n50, 193, 198–99
Foucault's relationship of care and, 159–61
*phusiologia* of Foucault and, 233–37
*polis* model of, 294
*Seventh Letter* of, 145–48, 151n50
play
authorship and enactments and, 119–26
enactments in analytic encounters and, 120–21, 123
Freud's discussion of self-cultivation and, 109–19
reality-testing and, 113–16
Plotke, David, 281–82
Plutarch, 230
Pocock, JGA, 44–45
*polis*
Foucault's discussion of, 173–75
Platonic model of, 294
political science, education and failure of, 22n42
politics
American politics, 276n62, 276–81
*askesis* and, 209–10
asymmetrical relationships in, 304–06
audience response and, 229, 232, 278–81
authority in context of, 1–10
authorship and authority in, 137–38
Christianity and, 186–87n29
collective figuration and, 264–65
consensus building and, 205
contemporary politics and selfhood practices, 43–48
critical theory and, 291–92
culture and, 264–65
democratization and, 289–90
desire for change and, 294
in Dora case history, 78–86
drive theory and, 61n39
education and, 304–06
enactments and, 73–74
epistemology and, 30–31
ethical self-governance and, 204–05

politics (*cont.*)
failures of, 297
Foucault's discussion of, 10–18, 137–38, 142–45, 147–48, 150n48, 183–84
frame-breaking in, 268–73
Freud's contributions to, 10–18, 130–32
institutions and changes in, 293–94
interpretive frameworks in, 250–52, 276–78
literary theory and, 266–73
mediation of engagement in, 257
metaphor and, 258–66
organizing activities in, 282–83
*parrhesia* and, 148–49, 154–55, 200–01
practices in context of, xn1, x–xi
psychological underpinnings of, 53n8
public sphere and, 236–37
relationships and, 292
rhetorical strategies in, 263
risk and, 128–29, 170–75
self-governance and political engagement, 196–202
speech in context of, 37–43
subjectivity and, 180–87
"Politics and the Study of Discourse" (Foucault), 258–59, 265
Polsky, Andrew, 27–28
Poor People's Campaign, 282–83
postcolonialism, political theory and, 26n59
post-structuralism, expertise in context of, 7n9
power
authority and, 2–3, 16–18
authorship and authority and, 137–38
coercion and, 31–32
conceptual transition of authority to, 26–33
contemporary critiques of, ix–x, 30–33
discipline and nominalization of, 225–26
Foucault on ethics and, 135
Foucault on relations of, 225–32
Freud and Foucault on, ix
Freud on dependency and agency in relation to, 130–32
human relationships and, 27–28
postcolonial views of, 26n59
practices
intermediate space of psychoanalysis and context of, 66–70
language of, xn1
political theory and, xn1, x–xi
of self, contemporary politics and, 13n19, 43–48
precarity, uncertainty and, 106n44
probability, risk and, 128–29
progressive philosophy, political power and, 27–28
Propp, Vladimir, 302n15
psychagogue, Foucault's discussion of, 164–69
psychic change
authority and, 93–96
breaking the frame of self and, 109–19
disruptions as catalyst for, 112–13
failure and, 100
Freud's psychoanalytic theory and, 111–12
*Psychic Life of Power* (Butler), 35–36, 97–99, 121n83
psychoanalysis
academic influence of, 51–52n5, 55–61
analytic impartiality in, 106n44
"analytic third" in, 210n8
Arendt's philosophy in context of, 25–26
audience for, 207–11
authoritative practice and, 10–18
authority in relation to, 300–04
authorization and, 72–73, 224
authorship and authority and, 137–38, 266
common judgments and, 236–37
containing context of, 64–78
drive theory and, 103–05
dynamics of relations to authority, 49–92
educative model and, 36, 281–82
Foucault's critique of, 12–13, 13n17, 57–59, 64–65, 89–90, 90n118, 185–86, 260n18, 262–63
frame-breaking in, 271–72
Freud's clinical technique and, 2, 13n18, 13–16, 14n21, 15n24, 65–66
history in, 261–62
individualization and, 128–29
intermediate space of, 66–70, 294
interpretive authority in, 250–52
medicalization of, 52n7, 57–59, 72n78, 149n44
narrative authority of psychoanalyst in, 211–25
*parrhesia* and, 117–18n77, 140–41, 203–04, 259–61

philosophy and, 100n19
politics and, 117–18n77, 292–93
public culture and, 300–04
relational school of, 12n15
risk and, 126–30
speech-activities and, 37–43
testimony in, 88n116
therapeutic action to narrative in, 70–76
psychological economy, Freud's concept of, 105–08
public audience
academy as, 245–50
in American politics, 278–81
authorial potential of, 275–76
authority in relation to, 300–04
elites and, 273–85
ethopoetic action and, 240
Foucault's concept of, 225–32
media and, 283
norms and conventions for, 228
politics and, 292
resistance and, 227
role of listening in, 225–32

"Question of Lay Analysis, The" (Freud), 49n1, 49–53, 276

Rabinow, Paul, 182n11
Rabinowitz, Peter, 230n60, 266–68, 276n60
race inequality, crisis of authority and, 33
radical politics, ethical responsibility and, 6–7
Rajchman, John, 135–36
Rancière, Jacques, 2n2, 261n19, 283–84, 297–98
Rat Man case history, 61–63, 65–66, 214–15
absence of narrative in, 219–20
enactments in context of, 105–08
frame-breaking in, 274
objectification in, 217–19
reality-testing
authority and authorship and, 118–19
dreams and abandonment of, 110n54
excess and, 113–16
Freud's discussion of, 109–19
in psychoanalysis, 110, 110n53
self-narration/self-constitution and, 122–23
recollection, in psychoanalysis, 108n49, 108–09
recursive relativity, 271, 279–81
Reed, Gail, 59n32
Reik, Theodor, 49–50, 87
relational psychoanalysis, 12n15, 15n23, 57–59, 58n29, 59n32, 59n33
defined, 49n1
enactments and, 105–08
social space in, 262–63
subject-formation and, 108–09
transference and, 68n64
relationships.
"arts of living" and, 33–34
authority and, 23–26
in Foucault's work, 225–32
friendship and, 36n78
*parrhesia* and, 190–94, 199–200, 233–34
politics and, 168, 292
power and, 27–28
selfhood and, 33–37
therapeutic action to narrative and, 70–76
religion
authority and, 3–6
Freud on, 53n8
psychoanalysis and, 126–30
selfhood practices and, 44
reminiscence, in psychoanalysis, 108n49, 108–09
Renik, Otto, 106n44
repetitions, enactments and, 107–08, 107–08n48
*Republic* (Plato), 173–75, 193
resistance
Arendt's discussion of, 40
in case histories, 217–19
education and, 20n35
intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 66–70
political theory in context of, 7
psychoanalytic practices and, 86–87, 91–92
public sphere and, 227
transference and, 64n49
resolve, Foucault's ethics of self-governance and, 188–90

*ressentiment,* Nietzsche's concept of, 35–36, 189
rhetoric
  collective figuration and, 264–65
  *parrhesia* and, 16n25, 142n19
  in politics, 263
Rieff, Philip, 11–12, 51–52n5, 55–61
risk
  in analytic encounter, 50–51, 72–73
  in authority, 49–92
  combative collaboration and, 47–48
  critical discourse concerning, 127n97
  ethical practices of *parrhesia* and, 152
  of impersonality, 69
  *parrhesia* and, 140–41, 158
  in political institutions, 170–75
  in psychoanalytic practices, 126–30, 127n96
  trust and truth-telling and, 8–9
Roazen, Paul, 11–12, 51–52n5, 55–61
Rorty, Richard, xi, 33, 53–54, 248n108
  on Foucault, 164, 201n62, 202–03
  on psychoanalysis, 262n23
Rosenblum, Nancy, 202–03, 281–82
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 19n32
  on authority, 19–22
rule
  authority and, 18–26
  *parrhesia* as alternative to, 298

sacral spaces, 63n46
  in psychoanalysis, 61–63
Saïd, Edward, 290–91
Sartre, Jean-Paul, 181, 184–86, 192
*savoir,* Foucault's discussion of, 233
Saxonhouse, Arlene, 38n80, 142n17
scaffold, Foucault on spectacle of, 225–26
scenes of address, authority in terms of, 37–43
Schaar, John, 51–52n5, 53n8, 53n9, 53–54, 55–61, 66, 68
Schafer, Roy, 106n44
Schiller, Friedrich, 211
science and scientism
  in case histories, 216–17
  Freud's critique of, 13n18, 13–14
Scott, Joan Wallach, 102n26
*Search for a Method* (Sartre), 184–85
Searle, John, 158n66
Secession Ball, 278n68, 278n68
secularization, selfhood practices and, 44
self-formation
  ancient Classics and concepts of, 155–56, 158, 198–99
  asymmetrical relationships and, 7–10
  authorization and, 37, 43–48
  breaking the frame of, 109–19
  contemporary politics and, 43–48
  crisis of authority and, 47–48
  curiosity and resolve and, 188–90
  disposition to steadiness and, 190–94
  early frameworks for, xn1, xi–xiii
  ethical responsibility and, 6–7
  ethics of self-governance and, 153–57, 187–96
  Foucault on limits of, 165, 176–80, 186–87, 291
  freedom and dependency and, 130–32
  Freud on, 291
  *parrhesia* and formation of, 6n8, 16
  Platonic concept of, 147–48
  political context for, xiii, 257, 294
  power and authority and, 30–33
  psychic change and formation of, 100–08
  psychoanalysis and formation of, 61–63
  relational psychology and, 108–09
  relations with others and, 33–37
  therapeutics of, 89–90
  trauma and formation of, 95
self-governance. *See* governance
self psychology, emergence of, 57–59
Seneca, 20n33, 133, 141–45, 144n27, 153, 165–66, 188–89, 198–99, 230, 254
*Seventh Letter* (Plato), 198–99
  ethical practices of *parrhesia* in, 151–64
  Foucault's discussion of, 145–48, 151n50, 151–52n51
  self-governance in, 150
*Sexual Contract, The* (Pateman), 11–12
sexuality
  adult mastery of, 115–19
  in Dora case history, 78–86
  Foucault's discussion of, 142–45
  identity and, 102–03n28, 102–03
  psychic change and role of, 100–08
  psychoanalytic theory and, 56–59
Shelley, Mary, 266–68
Shepherdson, Charles, 61n38
Sherrod, Shirley, 284–85
Skinner, Quentin, 44–45
slavery, in American politics, 278–81

social identity, 9–10, 10n11
in Dora case history, 78–86
social sciences, influence of psychoanalysis in, 55n16, 55n19, 55–61
Socrates
Alcibiades and, 153
on education, 147–48
Foucault's *parrhesia* and speech of, 139–40, 154–55, 158
*Some Thoughts on Education* (Locke), 19–21, 20n33
*sophrosyne* (moderation), 179n6, 198–99
Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), 282–83
speech-acts
authority control and composition through, 285–88
authority in terms of, 37–43, 94n3
*parrhesia* and, 154–55, 158n66
testimony, 88n116
therapeutic action to narrative and, 70–76
Spence, Donald, 74n84, 77n88, 79n92, 82–83
on analytic impartiality, 106n44
Spivak, Gayatri, 31–32
*States of Injury* (Brown), 27–28, 253, 276–78
steadiness
disposition to, 179n6
ethical *vs.* political governance and, 204–05
*parrhesia* and disposition to, 190–94, 203–04
Stern, Donnel, 78
Stoicism, 173n113
ethopoetic function and, 235–36
Foucault's discussion of, 144
story-telling, Arendt on history and, 25
Strachey, James, 113n61
"Straight Mind, The" (Wittig), 264–65
Strawson, P. F., 53n8
Strong, Tracy, 28n65, 187n29
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), 282–83
*Studies in Hysteria* (Freud), 65–66
subjectivity. *See also* expressive subjectivity
ethics and, 184–86
failure narratives and, 97–109
Foucault's discussion of, 142–45, 156n64, 177–79, 183, 290–91, 296–97
Freud and, 290–91
political action and, 180–87
responsibility and, 304–06
substitution, psychic change and, 123
superego, Freud's discussion of, 104n36, 105–08
surfeit
Freud's concept of, 112–13
reality-testing and, 113–16
symbolic law, narrative capacity and, 212n9

Tanke, Josephe, 34n75
Taylor, Charles, 14–16, 45–46n89, 117, 255–56
*telos,* practices *vs.*, x–xi
testimony
frame-breaking and, 269–70
psychoanalytic speech as, 88n116
textuality, political theory and, 41–42
*Theatrum Philosophicum* (Foucault), 137–38, 263
therapeutic action
Bouveresse's discussion of, 100n19
in Dora case history, 78–86
metaphoric competency and, 95–96
*Nacherziehung* and, 51–53
narrative in asymmetrical relationships, 70–76, 251
psychoanalysis and limits of, 104, 224, 279–81
testimony contrasted with, 88n116
wanting, doing, and consequences of, 76–78
therapeutic relationship
case histories and, 220–21
interpretive authority in, 250–52
*Nacherziehung* (after/second education) and, 63–64
therapeutic action to narrative in, 70–76
therapeutic state, 7n9, 27–28, 51n4
therapeutics of self, 89–90
third party in psychoanalysis, 87–92
Todorov, Tzvetan, 137–38, 301–02, 302n15
*topoi,* political practices and, 45–46n89, 45–47
*Totem and Taboo* (Freud), 11–12

tradition, authority and, 3–6
tragedy
  Aristotle's definition of, 107–08
  Foucault's discussion of, 254, 254n1
  Nietzsche on, 177–79
transference, 67n60
  analytic encounter and, 95–96
  in case histories, 218–19n29
  in Dora case history, 78–86
  Freud's comments on, 80n95
  intermediate space of, 66–70, 67n62, 68–69n68
  Nietzsche's metaphor of, 259–61
  origins of, 71n77
  relational psychology and, 68n64
  resistance and, 64n49
trauma
  Felman's study of, 224
  frame-breaking and, 269–70
  self-formation and, 95
*Traum des Gefangenen (The Prisoner's Dream),* 32
trust
  in analytic encounters, 87
  Foucault on self-governance and, 166–68
  intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 68
  *parrhesia* and, 149–50, 156–57, 297
  politics of power and, 1–10
  psychoanalysis and role of, 87–92
truth-telling. *See also parrhesia*
  academia and, 248–49
  accessibility of, 302–03
  in analytic encounters, 87
  *askesis* and, 44
  consensus *vs.*, 243–45
  ethical practices of *parrhesia* and, 151–64
  expressive subjectivity and, 178–80, 194–96
  Foucault's *parrhesia* and, 16, 136n7, 156n64, 161–64
  intermediate space of, 153–57
  metaphoric play of, 261–62
  in Nietzsche's work, 259–61
  *parrhesia* as test of, 157–59
  political action and, 246–47
  politics of power and, 1–10
  psychoanalysis and role of, 87–92
  public debate and politics and, 205
  self-formation and, 187
Tully, James, 45, 100–01, 101–02n24, 249
  on Foucault, 135
Tunisia, Foucault in, 245–46

uncertainty
  absence of narrative authority and, 214–15
  precarity and, 106n44
*Undoing Gender* (Butler), 263–64n29
United States, Foucault's discussion of politics in, 173–75
universality, Freud and Foucault on, 263–64n29
universities. *See* academia
University of Chicago, 55–61
unknown, Freud's discussion of, 113n61, 113–16
*Untimely Meditations* (Nietzsche), 248n108
*Use of Pleasure, The* (Foucault), 142–45
  self-formation in, 187

*Vatican Sayings,* 235
verisimilitude, political theory and, 45–46n89
Veyne, Paul, 162, 180–81n8, 194–96, 202–03, 293–94
Vichy France
  Arendt's discussion of, 3–6, 40
  relations of authority in, 7–10
Vietnam War, 278
Virgil, 231
voice
  authority and, 61–63, 62n43
  narrative authority of psychoanalyst and, 214–15
vulnerability
  authority's impact on, 31–32
  Butler's discussion of, 35–36
  moral law and, 298–99
  public experience of, 278–81

Warner, Michael, 209n6, 209–10, 276, 283
*Wayward Youth* (Aichhorn), 211
Weber, Max, 17, 27–28, 54n11, 164, 202–03, 236, 243n99
*What is an Author?* (Foucault), 137–38, 227–28, 285–86
  archival effects discussed in, 265
*What is Critique?* (Foucault), 168, 285–86

*What is Enlightenment?* (Kant), 164–65, 177–79
"What is Enlightenment?" (Foucault lecture), 244n100
White, Hayden, 261n19
Wilkerson, Isabel, 278n67
Williams, Bernard, 136n7, 156n64, 248n108
Winnicott, Donald, 57n26
Winter, Sarah, 261n20
*Without Sanctuary* (exhibition), 278–81, 279n69
witness, frame-breaking and, 269–70
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, xn1, 44–45, 94–95, 100–08, 249, 302–03
  on change, 101n22
  Foucault's ethics and influence of, 135, 163
  on language, 103n30, 103–05
  therapeutic aspects in philosophy of, 100n19
  on thinking, 100n18
  Zerilli's work and influence of, 104n34
Wittig, Monique, 103–05, 264–65, 271–72, 274
*Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man,* 216–17
Wolf Man case history, 61–63, 216–17
  absence of narrative in, 219–20
  objectification in, 217–19
Wolin, Sheldon, 51–52n5, 55–61
Woloch, Alex, 302n15
*World, the Text, and the Critic, The* (Saïd), 290–91
Wray, David, 142–45

Young, Iris Marion, 69–70, 281–82

Zerilli, Linda, xn1, 264–65
  on affect and agency, 103n31, 103–05
  on authorship and enactments, 119–26
  public space and work of, 279–80
  on relationships, 104n34
Zola, Émile, 181
*zoon politikon,* 28
*Zwischenreich* (ruling-between), intermediate space of psychoanalysis and, 69–70